University of Alberta

Experiences of Adolescent Sibling Sexual Offenders: Changing Through Counselling

by

Michelle Dawn Vandegriend ©

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education

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Abstract

Relatively little is understood about adolescent sibling sexual abuse and it remains under-represented in the literature. A phenomenological research method was chosen to elucidate the unique experiences of adolescents who sexually offend against a sibling in terms of the thoughts and beliefs present before, during, and after the sexual abuse, and the adolescent sibling sexual offender's awareness and understanding of the thoughts and beliefs changing as a result of counselling. Three male participants who were in treatment or just recently completed treatment for sexually abusing a biological, step-, or adoptive female sibling were interviewed. From interview transcripts and thorough data analysis seven shared themes were identified and were organized into three higher-level themes, which capture the essence of their experience: (1) Internal and External Turmoil Precipitated Offending, (2) Thoughts of Wanting to Stop Offending, and (3) Progressively Experienced Positive Change and Growth from Counselling.

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Standing where I am today is a result of the love and encouragement from my family. To my mother (Darlene Strychar), my father (Dennis Strychar), and my brother (Kevin Strychar), whose steady source of inspiration and unshakable belief in my abilities kept me forging ahead.

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Chapter One

Introduction

Overview of the Phenomenon

Adolescent sibling sexual abuse remains underreported and at times misunderstood, yet research suggests that it is the most widespread form of abuse within families (Allan & De Jong, 1989; Ascherman & Safier, 1990; DiGiorgio-Miller, 1998; Smith & Isreal, 1987). O'Brien (1991, p.75) states that, "research literature on family sexual abuse has largely ignored sibling incest, dismissing it as relatively harmless." Although research in this area has grown in the past few years, it has focused on areas that surround the nature of the offender's experiences. This research has centered on defining and categorizing adolescent sibling sexual abuse, individual characteristics of adolescent sibling sexual offenders, family environments and dynamics that precipitate an adolescent offender's sexual abuse toward a sibling, and individual, group, and family treatment interventions. Information remains scarce about the "inner world" of adolescent sibling sexual offenders.

Questions about this inner world include what were the core experiences of these adolescents around the time of the offending, what were their thoughts and beliefs before, during, and after the offending, and what is their awareness and understanding about how their thoughts and beliefs changed as a result of counselling? It is these questions that are the focus of this study.

Gaining a greater and deeper understanding of adolescent sibling sexual offenders' thoughts and beliefs around the time of the offending is essential in the development of effective counselling strategies. Learning how they believe their thoughts and beliefs have changed as a result of counselling can enhance the process of treatment in working with adolescent sibling sexual offenders.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this study is to add to the information about adolescent sibling sexual offenders by elucidating the unique experiences of adolescents who sexually offend against a sibling in terms of the thoughts and beliefs present before, during, and after the sexual abuse, and the adolescent sibling sexual offender's awareness and understanding of the thoughts and beliefs changing as a result of counselling. For this study a phenomenological research method was considered most appropriate because it is concerned with understanding the essence and meaning of another's experience. It was felt that this type of research would capture an understanding of the lived experience of the adolescent sibling sexual offender.

Format of the Study

This thesis has five chapters: Introduction, Literature Review, Methodology, Data Analysis and Results, and Discussion. The introductory chapter provides background information concerning the phenomenon as well as a statement of purpose of the research. Chapter 2 discusses the existing literature about adolescent sibling sexual offenders, which begins with definitions, categorizations, common characteristics, and suggested prevalence rates. A review of common familial dynamics and treatment interventions and outcomes is also provided. Chapter 3, the methodology chapter, describes the foundations of the phenomenological research method, bracketing, participants, step-by-step procedures, and the stages of data analysis. Chapter 4 presents the themes that emerged from the analysis of the results. Chapter 5 concludes by discussing the findings in relation to the existing literature, limitations of the study, and implications for future research.

Chapter Two

Review of the Literature

Relatively little is understood about adolescent sibling sexual abuse and it remains under-represented in the literature. Smith and Isreal (1987, p.101) state that "the subject of adolescents who offend against a sibling is sorely lacking in study, theory, and specific documentation." As well, research in this area by Rudd and Herzberger (1999, p.915) concluded that "brother-sister sexual abuse is one of the current blind spots in incest research, and one that we can not afford to ignore." Adolescent sibling sexual abuse is considered a subcategory of adolescent sexual abuse, and in general little is understood about adolescent sexual abuse. Vizard and Usiskin (1999) do not find it surprising that "little has yet been written about the inner world of the adolescent sexual offender since it is only recently that there has been acknowledgment of the prevalence of the problem." The aim of this study is to add to the information about adolescent sibling sexual offenders in the research. Information in this area most often appears as brief vignettes that demonstrate certain elements surrounding adolescent sibling sexual abuse. More information needs to be elucidated about the unique experiences of adolescents who sexually offend against a sibling in terms of the thoughts and beliefs present before, during, and after the sexual abuse, and the adolescent sibling sexual offender's awareness and understanding of the thoughts and beliefs changing as a result of counselling.

In this chapter, a review of the literature is presented with regard to definitions and categorizations of adolescent sibling sexual abuse, common characteristics of adolescent sibling sexual offenders, suggested prevalence rates, family dynamics, treatment interventions, and outcome studies of treatment interventions.

The Research on Adolescent Sibling Sexual Offenders

Definitions

Pierce and Pierce (1990) define adolescent sexual offenders as individuals under the age of eighteen who engage in some form of sexual activity such as exposure, fondling and intercourse, usually involving force or manipulation to engage the victim. Lordeo (1982) defines sibling sexual abuse as sexual interaction between siblings who have one or both parents in common. More violent forms of sibling sexual abuse involve an aggressive sibling who acts out sexually with a younger sibling in order to satisfy needs for retaliation, retribution, and power (Lordeo, 1982). Often the ages of the children involved have been used to determine if the behavior is abusive. It has been suggested that in sexual activity between children who are five years apart in age, the older sibling is abusing the younger sibling even if the activity is considered normal for similarly aged children (Watkins & Bentovim, 1992). Other researchers have suggested that if there is an age difference of two or more years between the siblings it could indicate an abusive situation (Watkins & Bentovin, 1992; Johnson, 1988).

Categories

Pierce and Pierce (1990) differentiate sibling sexual abuse into two categories. In the first category it begins as mutual exploration and it ends as children come to realize the inappropriateness of this behavior. The second category involves one sibling implementing force and manipulation to engage in sexual activities. In this case the perpetrator may be acting out extreme family difficulties, copying the sexual behavior of other abused siblings, or participating in promiscuous activity due to his or her own abuse by a family member. Similarly, Bank and Kahn (1982) differentiate between two types of sibling sexual abuse. The first is called nurturance-oriented which occurs by mutual consent and may contain elements of loyalty and love. The second type is called power-oriented, which is described as sadistic, exploitative, and coercive, and it often involves deliberate physical or mental abuse.

Overall, adolescent sibling sexual abuse, according to the definitions above, involves sexual behavior such as exposure, fondling, or intercourse committed by a sibling under the age of eighteen with a younger sibling. It can be categorized as mutual exploration or nurturance-oriented as well as violent and manipulative or power-oriented.

Common Characteristics of Adolescent Sibling Sexual Offenders

In a study by Groth and Loredo (1981), adolescent sibling sex offenders were found to have low self-esteem, deep seated feelings of inadequacy and emptiness, and an inability to handle the demands of every day life. Longo and Groth (1983) described adolescent sex offenders as either passive in which the offending is nonviolent (i.e., exhibitionism) or aggressive in which the offending is violent (i.e., acting out violent threats).

In a study by Pierce and Pierce (1990), the age of adolescent sibling offenders ranged from 4 to 16 years with an average age of 13 years. Twenty percent of the victims were biological sisters, stepsisters, or adoptive sisters, 19% were foster sisters, 16% were foster brothers, and five percent were biological brothers. Eighty-one percent of the offenders in this study were male and 67% were white. The offender was also usually the oldest child of his/her gender in the family. Case workers involved in this study described the offenders as aggressive toward family members (54%) with half of them being involved in delinquent acts, and half having academic difficulties. Thirty-eight percent had behavioral problems such as running away, stealing from family members, or withdrawing. Thirty-eight percent had also been placed in special classes at school and 14% were diagnosed as mentally retarded. Twenty-four percent of the parents were involved in substance abuse, 14% were in prison, over half had financial difficulties and almost half needed better housing, 54% of parents were judged to be mentally ill by their case worker, and in two of the families children had died because of neglect.

Becker, Kaplan, Cunningham-Rathner, and Kavoussi (1986) found that adolescent sibling sex offenders are not likely to commit crimes against nonfamily, but are more likely to exhibit antisocial behaviors such as physical aggression, lying, and stealing. In their study, one-half of adolescent sibling sex offenders had nonsexual arrests and 63% were diagnosed as conduct-disordered.

Prevalence Rates

It has been suggested that adolescent sibling sexual abuse is a common type of sexual abuse in families, yet little is known about the actual prevalence of adolescent sibling sexual abuse (Araji, 1997; Ascherman & Safier, 1990; Cole, 1982; Allan & De Jong, 1989). This may be due to factors such as parents minimizing the incident(s) in order to protect their child from a harmful label, ignoring it as developmental curiosity, or the victim's fear of disclosure (Allan & De Jong, 1989).

In 1980, Finkelhor conducted a survey involving 796 college undergraduate students. He found that 13% of the total population (15% of the females and 10% of the males) had sexual experiences with a sibling. Twenty-five percent of these incidents were regarded as expoitative because force was involved.

Renvoize (1982) argues that these percentages are representative for college students at large and that in all probability the actual figure is higher. Other researchers found that in their study 8.5% of 118 subjects, who were college students, had been victims of sibling sexual abuse (Tsai & Wagner, 1979).

In 1991, O'Brien compared 170 adolescents who sexually offended against a step-sibling, half-sibling or adoptive sibling with those who offended against children other than their siblings, those who sexually victimized peers or adults, and with those whose victims may have included a combination of sibling and extrafamilial children and/or peers and adults. He found that sibling offenders perpetrated the greatest number of abusive acts (average of 18 incidents). Nearly 45% of the sibling offenders had been committing offenses for more than a year (compared to 23 percent of extrafamilial offenders and 24 percent of adult/peer offenders), and they were also more likely to have multiple victims. O'Brien hypothesized that factors such as victim availability may have contributed to the offending histories.

Family Dynamics

The family system incorporates certain beliefs, roles, and expectations of its members and it serves as a holding environment for the developing child. Sibling relationships within the family system play an important role in children's cognitive, emotional, and behavioral development, and children in remarried families or cohabiting relationships may find added complexities in their relationships (Hetherington, 1999). Children exposed to sibling sexual abuse perceive it differently throughout their development. Very young children may be confused and not understand the activity to be wrong; they may also incorporate it into their daily behavior (DiGiorgio-Miller, 1998). From the ages of six to thirteen, however, children can begin to conceptualize the sexual activity as wrong and feelings of guilt and shame are common (DiGiorgio-Miller, 1998). If the sexual abuse proceeds into adolescence, the siblings commonly have psychological difficulties and problems in subsequent relationships with others (DiGiorgio-Miller, 1998). It should come as no surprise, therefore, to find that much of the literature on sibling sexual abuse has implicated family dysfunction as a precipitating factor of an adolescent offending against a sibling.

Ryan (1991) suggests that some of the common dynamics seen in families of adolescent sibling sexual offenders are emotional impoverishment and lack of appropriate affect. He states that some family members either show no affect at all or display extreme affect that is inappropriate or out of context to the situation. Affective cues are either absent or incongruent, making it difficult to assess how family members are feeling (Ryan, 1991). Secrets within the family are also common and information may not be available for validation and/or correction because of the denial of feelings that has served to protect forms of dysfunction (Ryan, 1991). Distorted, negative attachments between family members arise from role reversals, sexualized attention, bonds grounded in negative shared emotions, or the parent's own childhood dysfunctions (Haynes-Seman & Krugman, 1988). Also, a history of disruptions in care and function, such as from crises, illness, incarcerations, divorce, abandonment, ~~and~~ foster placements, result in a perception of chaos and isolation for the adolescent rather than connection and control (Ryan, 1991). Lack of parental involvement, feelings of powerlessness as a result of dissolution of the family or rejection, past abuse, and lack of familial boundaries are also common in the family dynamics of adolescents who sexual abuse a sibling and are described further below (Ryan, 1991).

Lack of parental involvement. When there is a persistent lack of parental involvement and supervision in families, siblings turn to each other to fulfill the need for comfort and guidance. If an older sibling begins to abuse the younger sibling, the younger sibling is less likely to disclose this to emotionally distant parents (DiGiorgio-Miller, 1998). In one study, Becker et al. (1986) described the parents of twenty-seven adolescent male sibling offenders as underreporting and denying the physical and sexual abuse of their sons and as often victims of child abuse in their own childhood.

Smith and Israel (1987) studied the characteristics of 25 families of sibling incest perpetrators. They described distant and inaccessible parents, parental stimulation of the sexual climate in the home, and family secrets, especially with regard to extramarital affairs. In terms of physical distance, twelve percent of the fathers were deceased, 8% had abandoned their families shortly after birth of their children, and 16% of the men had divorced their wives and maintained no contact with their families. Twenty-four percent of the fathers were characterized as physically present but emotionally distant. These fathers provided a verbal account of not being interested in parenting, a failure to attach and bond with their children, and a feeling of being sabotaged by their wives' relationships with their children. Some felt they had nothing to give to their children and some fathers felt they did not understand normal, healthy child development. Twenty percent of the mothers were involved in either drug addiction or alcoholism, had a mental illness, and had periodic absences from the home environment.

Westermeyer (1978) also noted that sibling incest often occurs in families where the parents are distant and nonaffectionate. Adolescents in incestuous families are highly dependant individuals searching for an emotional connection and a close relationship that is not adequately provided by the parents; these individuals are also deeply searching for esteem and identity (De Young, 1981). As well, Santiago (1973) suggests that adolescent sibling sexual offending occurs when parents are physically and emotionally not available and siblings turn to each other instead to meet their needs. Mrazek and Bentovim (1981) likewise suggest that when the actions of the family do not meet the needs of the family members for nurturance, warmth, and care in an appropriate way relative to the maturity of those individuals, sexualization of what should be nurturant physical contact is substituted.

Daie, Witztum, and Eleff (1989) presented four clinical cases of adolescent sibling sexual abuse. The family characteristics in these cases included a father who was either absent or abusive, a mother who used her son psychologically as a substitute for the absent father, and a child who had difficulty identifying with the parent of the same gender.

Through an in-depth interview, Laviola (1992) explored the effects of older brother-younger sister sexual abuse from the perspective of seventeen women who experienced it in childhood or adolescent years. In general, the women in this study described their families of origin as dysfunctional in child-rearing practices, relational patterns amongst family members, family rules, and response patterns to family stressors. Almost all the women characterized their relationship with their parents as neglectful in that their parents showed no interest in the women's interests or emotional needs as a child. Relationships with brothers were very weak, and their families had rules about not expressing or denying individual family members' feelings and family problems. Families held views that men, as fathers, were superior, controlling, and dominant over women and children. As well, they described family atmospheres filled with stressors such as parental depression, disability, or financial hardship. Responses to these stressors involved withdrawl, spending longer hours at work, abusing substances, or not talking.

In a study by Rudd and Herzberger (1999), surveys were distributed to women attending support groups for incest survivors. Of 62 questionnaires completed, 14 women (23%) reported being sexually abused by a brother as compared to 15 women who had been sexually abused by a father. They also reported that parental care was lacking due to the unavailability or death of fathers in the families. Also, while the mothers were physically present, the participants in the study described them as ineffectual, hampered by alcoholism, mental illness, spousal abuse, or were abusive themselves. Many respondents indicated that they reported the sibling sexual abuse to their parents, but it resulted in no intervention.

Feeling of powerlessness. Adolescent sibling sexual abuse is also understood as a pathological response to the fear of dissolution of the family, rejection, and separation (Mayer, 1985). New relationships in families brought about by remarriage can result in the offender feeling a loss of status in the family, which is expressed by acting out on a younger sibling (DiGiorgio-Miller, 1998). Revoize (1982) explains sibling sexual abuse as a response to the offender's pervasive feelings of powerlessness where the offender may take from the younger sibling what they feel is not being given to them voluntarily, in which the offender's need to express power over something is temporarily satisfied.

Also, although the offender may gain a sense of power and control over the victim and be allowed to make "parental" decisions, the offender may continue to feel a sense of powerlessness over his or her own impulses, especially if he or she was once a victim of sexual abuse (DiGiorgio-Miller, 1998).

Other abusive circumstances. An increased rate of physical abuse was noted by O'Brien (1991) amongst families of sibling offenders (61% compared to 45% of extrafamilial offenders and 35% of adult/peer offenders). Sibling offenders in this study experienced sexual abuse more frequently by their fathers than did other offenders. Thirty-six percent of the sibling offenders' mothers and 10% of their fathers had been sexually abused as children (compared to 9.1% of extrafamilial offenders' mothers and 5.5 % of their fathers).

In Laviola's (1992) study, the participants indicated that their families form of discipline included verbal or physical abuse. Abusive methods involved hitting with a switch or belt which left bruises and cuts, calling children derogatory names, and/or severely ridiculing children in front of their siblings. Physical and verbal aggression against other family members was also indicated as a way of releasing stress present within the family.

Lack of familial boundaries. Larson and Maddock (1986) suggest that incest within families should be understood as a reflection of "boundary disturbances". He states that a boundary is a key factor in families that establishes what a system is, how it is organized, what processes will occur within that system, and how it will interact with its environment. Incest is then a reflection of a family system that is closed, undifferentiated, and rigid in both structure and function; it is a product of substantial boundary disturbances.

Many studies have indicated that enmeshment is a major factor of adolescent sibling sexual abuse (Ascherman & Safier, 1990; Cashwell & Caruso, 1997; DiGiorgio-Miller, 1998; Larson & Maddock, 1986). The enmeshed family, otherwise called a rigid family, has a poor sense of interpersonal boundaries with family members and is often socially isolated and secretive (Lemmond & Verbaagen, 2002). Canavan, Meyer, and Higgs (1992) state that family members become overly dependant on one another and yield autonomy in order to feel like they belong. In Allan and De Jong's study (1989) features of sexual abuse by cousins and siblings was described and differentiated from normal sexual exploration. In their study, only 4 of the 35 sibling incest victims lived with both natural parents, 29 (83%) lived in a single parent home in which older siblings were placed in the position of secondary care-givers or baby-sitters. It was felt that elements of this living arrangement, in combination with other factors, fostered distorted limits and role boundaries and facilitated inappropriate sexual contacts. For example, victims were left alone with individuals who were known to have sexually abused children in the past. Sgroi (1982) states that adolescent sibling sexual abuse is fostered in home environments that fail to protect children (i.e., poor supervision or choice of caretaker) or fail to set appropriate limits (i.e., role boundaries).

Adolescent Sibling Sexual Offenders and Treatment

Treatment interventions used with adolescent sexual offenders are applicable to treatment with adolescent sibling sexual offenders. The National Task Force on Juvenile Sexual Offending (National Adolescent Perpetrator Network, 1993) stresses that the most crucial goal in treatment with adolescents who have sexually offended is the safety of others. Cellini (1995) describes helping adolescent sexual offenders gain control over their abusive behavior and increase positive interactions with peers and family as an important treatment intervention. As well, Becker and Hunter (1997) suggest treatment goals such as preventing further victimization, preventing the development of other psychosexual problems, and assisting the adolescent in developing age-appropriate relationships with others. Leaders in the field of adolescent sexual offender treatment feel that programs developed to focus exclusively on sexual offending behavior have limited value and they recommend a holistic approach which entails individual, group, and family therapy (Goocher, 1994).

Individual intervention. The first stage in individual counselling focuses on reducing the adolescent offender's denial and minimization of the sexually abusive behavior (Barbaree & Cortoni, 1993; Cashwell & Caruso, 1997; Davis & Leitenberg, 1987). Denial and minimization create an environment in which the adolescent offender does not want to be assessed or treated (Barbaree & Cortoni, 1993). Denial can take many forms. For example, the adolescent offender may deny committing the offense altogether, claim that although the behavior was sexual there was consent because the victim did not resist, or admit to the act but deny that it was sexual in nature (Barbaree & Cortoni, 1993). Minimization also can take many forms. Three basic forms are the minimization of the harm done to the victim(s), the extent of previous offensive behavior, and the extent of the perpetrator's responsibility for offending (Barbaree & Cortoni, 1993).

Increasing acceptance, responsibility, and empathy is a major component of individual treatment as well as the development of insight into the specific reasons or events that precipitated the offense. According to Friedrich (1990) the development of empathy decreases the likelihood of future sexual offenses. The major aim is to engage in alternative thinking and behaviors in order to interrupt the sexual abuse cycle and prevent further offenses (Ryan, Lane, Davis, & Isaac, 1987). The sexual abuse cycle as shown in Figure 1 is a construct. It describes the process of cognitive and behavioral progressions occurring prior to, during, and subsequent to sexual offending (Lane, 1991). The sexual perpetrator responds to an event that triggers negative self-perceptions and feelings of helplessness, and past experiences and personal views of the world influence perceptions of the events (victim-stance orientation and negative expectations). After attempting to avoid the expected outcome(s) there are attempts to exert power over others in both sexual and nonsexual ways. This response counters feelings of powerlessness and inadequacy; the offender subsequently assimilates the behavior through cognitions that involve erroneous conclusions (Lane, 1991). For example, the adolescent offender may reframe the behavior as the right to get what they want at any cost. Using the sexual abuse cycle as a model in treatment can aid the adolescent sexual offender with developing a clear understanding of their offense patterns. They can learn to use a variety of interventions and interrupt their progression toward a sexual offense as well as learn to modify the thoughts and dysfunctional coping styles that have supported their offense behaviors (Lane, 1991).

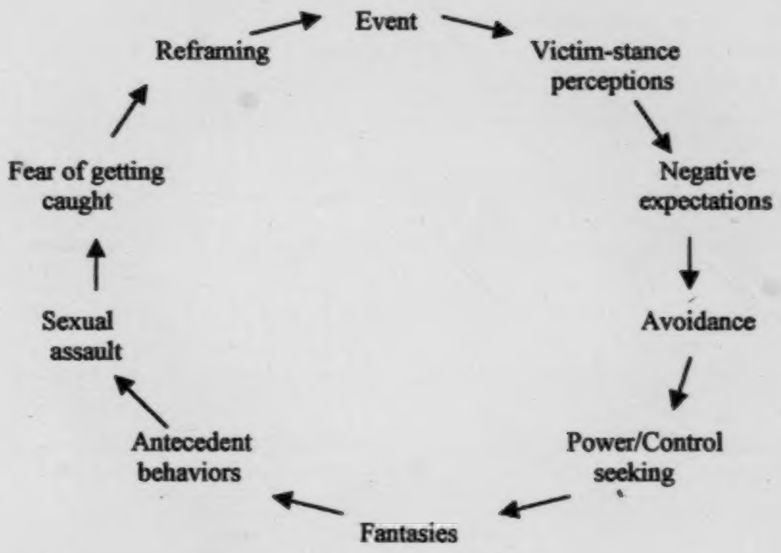
Event
Victim-stance perceptions
Negative expectations
Avoidance
Power/Control seeking
Fantasies
Antecedent behaviors
Sexual assault
Fear of getting caught
Reframing

Figure 1. The Sexual Abuse Cycle (Lane, 1991).

Additional issues in individual treatment that should be addressed are the offender's own victimization experiences and how this impacts the offender's current lifestyle (Kahn & Lafond, 1988), education about sexuality, confrontation and correction of cognitive distortions, anger management, and social skills training (Becker & Hunter, 1997).

Group intervention. Many of the interventions in individual treatment are also incorporated into group counselling. Treatment in a group setting offers adolescent sexual offenders additional support, safety, and the opportunity to explore their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. Unlike individual treatment, confrontation and challenges from same-age peers are powerful influences that can be used positively to create change (Print & O'Callaghan, 1999). Confrontation is useful because at the onset of therapy members often make dishonest comments in order to present themselves in a positive manner and rationalize their behavior (Margolin, 1983). As well, Nicholaichik (1991) reports that peer support within an adolescent sex offender treatment group is an important therapeutic factor in developing confidence and encouragement of disclosure. Recognition between group members that they are not alone, are worthy of respect, have positive attributes, and are valued by others can provide a positive peer culture and the motivation to succeed. Seeing others progress can be a potent message to others that change is possible and beneficial (Print & O'Callaghan, 1999).

Lombardo and DiGiorgio-Miller (1988) suggest six elements that should be incorporated into group counselling with adolescent sex offenders: (1) talking about the offense in detail; (2) having the perpetrator outline the steps which led to the offenses and look for patterns of offending behavior; (3) focusing on feelings before, during, and after the offense(s); (4) dramatization through role-play allowing members to act out emotions involved in the offending; (5) imaging and altering scenes of offenses toward more appropriate ones; and (6) stimulating discussion and education about appropriate interactions.

Once the offender has attained an acceptable level of motivation for group treatment, relapse prevention is incorporated. This is a way of maintaining behavioral changes made in treatment. It involves identifying high-risk situations for each offender and teaching each offender to recognize their occurrence. They are also taught to identify lapses or decisions that lead them closer to relapse, and how to cope with high-risk situations and lapses to prevent the occurrence of other ones (Carey & McGrath, 1989; Jenkins-Hall & Marlatt, 1989; MacDonald & Pithers, 1989).

Family intervention. Involving the family in the process of therapy is regarded as an important aspect of treatment with adolescent sibling sexual offenders. Family therapy can involve working with the offender's biological family or guardians to prepare the adolescent offender for independence from or reintegration into the family. Therapy can be as basic as using the family as a resource or as complex as integrating the offender into a complicated family system (Thomas, 1991).

The advantages for the offender in family treatment include facilitating acceptance that the abuse occurred, creating a context of responsibility, constructing a context of relational empathy, and reconstructing how others view the offender and in doing so reconstruct relationships (Burnham, Moss, Debelle, & Jamieson, 1999). Advantages for the victim include reducing the feeling of self-blame, seeing that professionals are working to change the behavior of the sibling that abused them, and creating a positive view of the future in which relationships can be rehabilitated (Burnham et al., 1999). The advantages for other members of the family include a feeling of contribution to the process of change, gaining an understanding that makes re-offending less likely, and demonstrating the seriousness of the behavior (Burham et al., 1999). Rasmussen (1999) states that adequate family support assists in reducing recidivism and that treatment programs which include families are more effective than ones that do not.

A possible disadvantage for all members in family therapy is a shift in the family's position regarding the abuse. Gray and Pithers (1993) feel that families vary in terms of their motivation and ability to effectively facilitate their child's treatment. When a family denies the abuse it disrupts treatment for both the victim and the offender, in which the victim may recant the abuse because she or he feels ostracized and can not deal with the consequences of disclosing the abuse (DiGiorgio-Miller, 1998). A nonsupportive family may be more difficult to work with than an absent or distant one. DiGiorgio-Miller (1998) states, however, that "a clinician should not assume that the family is entirely unworkable because the parents are sympathetic to the offender. The offender is their child as much as the victim is and the parents realize that the offender is also upset by the disclosure" (p. 336).

Straus (1994) has outlined eight family issues that should be addressed during family therapy: (1) the development of more appropriate physical and emotional boundaries between family members; (2) confronting and challenging the belief that the outside world is hostile and that there is danger in telling others family secrets; (3) addressing external and internal stress and developing appropriate family resources and positive coping mechanisms; (4) addressing the possibility of intergenerational sexual or physical abuse; (5) improving appropriate expression of emotions and communication; (6) reducing conflicting messages between parents who are distant and unavailable or intrusive and controlling, and moving them toward a more moderate level of interaction with the offender; (7) helping family members support each other's emotional needs or find alternatives such as community support programs; and (8) address issues of power, control, and responsibility of each family member.

Family treatment in any setting involves a combination of formal family therapy delivered as individual family sessions, multiple group therapy or a combination of the two, parent/family education which presents a less threatening way to introduce difficult concepts such as sexual abuse, and individual family meetings to gather information and discuss issues not appropriate in a group setting (Lundrigan, 2001). Figure 2 is a model developed by Lundrigan (2001) to illustrate how aspects and modes work in combination with each other within family therapy. The client-only aspect relates to family issues worked on by the adolescent offender in other treatment and program components. The family-only aspect involves the parents and other family members working through issues with the support of family, friends, and mental health professionals. The client and family aspect represents interactions at home or during visits, planning for a safe home environment, and resolving conflicts.

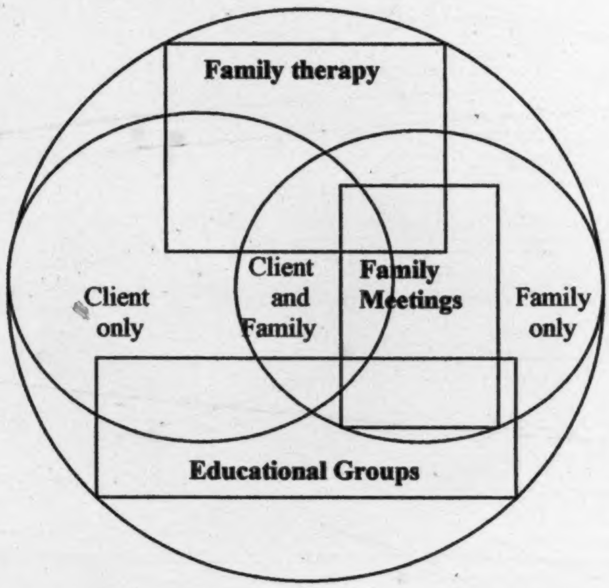

Figure 2. Aspects and Models in the Family Treatment Component (Lundrigan, 2001).

Figure 2 also shows how educational groups and family therapy may work with family alone, the client alone, or with the client and family members together. The individual family meetings provide opportunities to either meet with the family members without the client present or meet with the client and the family together. The overlapping combination of educational groups, family therapy, individual family meetings, and individual client therapy creates a more comprehensive family treatment intervention.

Once the adolescent offender understands the impact the sexual abuse had on the sibling and empathizes with him or her, and the family accepts and understands the etiology of the offending behavior and can support the victim, an apology session can take place. This occurs only if the victim is ready to hear the offender speak about the offense (Madanes, 1990). This is known as a healing session for the victim and can lead to positive outcomes and open communication for all members within the family.

Outcome studies for treatment. Despite the proliferation of treatment programs and methods over the past few years there are currently few studies that have evaluated the outcome or effectiveness of treatment with adolescent sibling sexual offenders (Breer, 1996; Print & Callaghan, 1999; Righthand & Welch, 2001).

Chaffin and Bonner (1998) feel that at this point in time it is difficult to determine if one type of treatment is more effective than another type. They do believe however, that a multisystemic treatment approach appears to be more effective than individual counselling alone with adolescents who have committed a sexual offense against a sibling.

A survey of treatment providers in North Amercia who work with adult and adolescent sex offenders offenders was conducted by Knopp, Freeman-Longo, and Stephenson (1992). They found that 98% identified peer/group programs as a preferred treatment model.

Becker and Kaplan (1993) conducted an outpatient treatment program for adolescent sex offenders at the New York State Psychiatric Institute. It involved a cognitive-behavioral approach and included a comprehensive assessment to determine treatment needs, specific entry criteria such as acknowledgement of the offense by the adolescent, and a 40-week closed group-treatment process. Following treatment each adolescent was assessed on four occasions over a period of six months. They found the treatment to be effective according to self-reports, rearrests, and plethysmographic data. They stated that of the 300 adolescents assessed, 205 entered treatment, and although only 56 adolescents attended 70 to 100% of the scheduled therapy sessions, recidivism rates at the one-year post-treatment follow-up were low. Self-reports and reports from parents and criminal justice agencies indicated that of the adolescents who completed treatment 9% had reoffended sexually (Becker & Kaplan, 1993).

In another study, Kimball and Guarino-Ghezzi (1996) compared 75 adolescent sex offenders treated in non-sex offense specific treatment programs with adolescent sex offenders in sex-specific treatment programs. At a six-month follow-up after treatment, they found that offenders placed in the sex-specific programs demonstrated more positive attitudes, greater skill acquisition, expressed more remorse related to the impact on the victim and better articulated relapse prevention concepts and strategies. They were also more likely to accept full responsibility for their offenses than offenders in the non-sex offense specific programs.

Summary

Presently, research has focused on elements that surround the experiences of adolescent sibling sexual offenders. These elements include definitions and categorizations of adolescent sibling sexual abuse, common characteristics of adolescent sexual offenders, suggested prevalence rates, dysfunctional familial patterns, and treatment interventions applicable to adolescent sexual offenders in general. As well, some studies have evaluated the effectiveness of treatment interventions used with adolescent sexual offenders.

Sibling sexual abuse has been defined as sexual interaction between siblings who have one or both parents in common, and who may be five years apart in age or more. It can also be categorized as mutual exploration or nurturance-oriented as well as manipulation or power-oriented.

Various characteristics of adolescent sibling sexual offenders have been identified. These include low self-esteem, feelings of inadequacy and emptiness, difficulty forming relationships with others, and academic difficulties. They are often the oldest sibling of his/her gender in the family and exhibit antisocial behaviors such as lying, stealing, drug abuse, and physical aggression.

Although it is suggested that adolescent sibling sexual abuse is a common type of sexual abuse in families, it often goes unreported. Suggested prevalence rates of adolescent sibling sexual abuse from previous studies have ranged from 8% to 15%.

Much research has suggested that severe family dysfunction plays an important role in an adolescent sexually offending against a sibling. Common familial dynamics include a lack of parental involvement, an adolescent sexual offender's feelings of powerlessness brought about by a loss of status in the family, rejection, or separation, past abusive circumstances such as physical, verbal, or sexual abuse, and a lack of clear familial boundaries.

Treatment approaches with adolescent sibling sexual offenders, and adolescent sexual offenders in general, usually incorporate a combination of individual therapy, group counselling, and family intervention. Few outcome studies have been conducted that evaluate the effectiveness of treatment with adolescent sexual offenders. Some studies have indicated that overall therapists prefer a multisystemic treatment approach or peer/group counselling over individual therapy alone with adolescent sexual offenders. Other studies found that through therapy adolescent sexual offenders gain a more positive attitude and greater skill acquisition, express more remorse, and better articulate the concepts and strategies learned in order to control behaviors and emotions associated with offending.

Further research is needed to provide information directly concerning the unique experiences of adolescent sibling sexual offenders, in terms of their thoughts and beliefs before, during, and after the offending, and how they believe their thoughts and beliefs have changed as a result of counselling. My choice of a phenomenological research study aims to build on what has been identified in the literature of adolescent sibling sexual offenders.

Chapter Three

Methodology

The aim of this study is to explore adolescent sibling sexual offenders' experience, in terms of their thoughts and beliefs, around the time of their offending and how they feel their thoughts and beliefs have changed as a result of being in a counselling. The literature in this area has focused on elements that surround the experiences of adolescent sibling sexual offenders: defining and categorizing adolescent sibling sexual abuse, identifying common characteristics of adolescent sexual offenders, prevalence rates, and describing dysfunctional familial patterns. Treatment interventions used with adolescent sexual offenders and the effectiveness of treatment interventions have also been discussed. Information regarding adolescent sibling sexual offenders' inner experience is needed to build on the existing literature.

For this study a phenomenological research method was considered most appropriate because it is concerned with understanding the essence and meaning of another's experience. It is a qualitative approach that is holistic and exploratory in nature, which focuses on developing a thick description of a unique phenomenon. Van Kaam (1966) emphasized that empirical phenomenology seeks to disclose and elucidate the phenomena of interest as it presents itself in the "here-and-now" and that a preconceived, experimental design and statistical method may "distort rather than disclose a given behavior through an imposition of restricted theoretical constructs on the full meaning and richness of human behavior" (p.14). In a human science approach, privileged access to meanings of a particular phenomenon is not obtained through statistical data but rather through "perception, cognition, and language" (von Eckartsberg, 1998). Rather than trying to quantify one's experience, phenomenological research attends to the deeper understanding of another's reality. It was felt that a qualitative approach for this study would, therefore, capture a truer understanding of the lived experience.

The Phenomenological Research Approach

The phenomenological research approach seeks to return to experience to obtain comprehensive descriptions that provide the basis for a reflective analysis that portrays the core meanings of a shared experience (Moustakas, 1994). It focuses on the question, "What is the nature or essence of a particular experience so that one can better understand what this experience is like for this specific population?" (Patton, 2002).

The phenomenological approach is based on existential-phenomenological philosophy, which suggests no separate or objective reality; there is only what people know their experience is and the meaning they assign to it (Patton, 2002). That is, people and the world as they experience it are intertwined. People do not live in a vacuum, separate and apart from the world. People come to know their world through their interaction and participation in it (Hein & Austin, 2001). Husserl coined the term *life-world* to describe this interaction as "the locus of interaction between ourselves and our perceptual environments and the world of experienced horizons within which we meaningfully dwell together" (von Eckartsberg, 1998, p. 4). Heidegger interpreted this experience as a "being-in-the-world" rather than simply existing (Hein & Austin, 2001).

Immersion in this method requires a suspension of all presuppositions. Giorgi (1997) explains that the phenomenon being explored is understood exactly as it presents itself to the consciousness of the person entering the awareness. In phenomenological research it is essential to be aware of and reflect on one's own judgements and perspectives; to take a step back from them in order to obtain a precise description of another's experience as it "is". The Greek term *Epoche* is a process in phenomenology, which refers to staying away from or refraining from judgement (Moustakas, 1994). On a day-to-day basis we naturally place judgement on the way we perceive our surroundings - we hold knowledge judgmentally (Patton, 2002). In contrast, Epoche encourages a new way of observing and understanding our surroundings. In phenomenological research this entails entering a reflective stance toward personal biases and preconceptions. It is a "phenomenological attitudinal shift" that requires rigor and a continuous analytical outlook (Patton, 2002). It is a step toward suspending the objective viewpoint as it tends to make the researcher ask questions such as what causes the phenomenon, instead of what is the phenomenon in its purist form (Ashworth, 1996).

Bracketing

The phenomenological approach is "discovery-oriented" and Giorgi (1997) states that "in order to discover meanings in the data, the researcher needs an attitude open enough to let unexpected meanings emerge" (p. 247). It is, therefore, essential in phenomenological research to undertake the method of bracketing to reveal the personal reality of the participants involved. Bracketing is an ongoing methodological principle in which the researcher uncovers, defines, and analyzes any presuppositions in order to gain clarity about the phenomenon being explored. It is important to realize that the researcher can never completely detach from his or her perspective. However, bracketing provides the possibility of moving toward a deeper level of meaning. According to Merleau-Ponty (1962), a complete separation from our presuppositions cannot be entirely secured because as we set one aside we uncover more beneath it (von Eckartsberg, 1998). In this process one must remain flexible and open to change. As the researcher discovers presuppositions, he or she constructs new, alternative views that become incorporated with the view of the participant in the study. Among the types of presuppositions to be bracketed are those based on previous research findings, theories, personal beliefs, and a ranking of elements perceived as more essential than other aspects. When bracketing is implemented relevant descriptions of participant's *life-world* can unfold in as undistorted a way as possible (Ashworth, 1996).

Bracketing Presuppositions

It is important in phenomenological research to remain sensitive to the ways in which data is collected and transformed; this includes awareness of assumptions and experiences that can influence the findings. Personal beliefs and biases need to be clearly identified at the onset of the research process to enhance the credibility of the results. Engaging in this process prior to the collection of the data for this study had prepared me to maintain a nonjudgemental viewpoint, let new perspectives come to surface, and allow the phenomenon to illuminate on its own.

My interest in adolescent sibling sexual offending developed through past employment in group homes for young offenders and practicum counselling experience with adult and adolescent sex offenders. Their experiences in life and upbringing are in stark contrast to my own. I can remember many stories from clients of home environments that were often dysfunctional, confusing, neglectful, and abusive, which perpetuated a spiral of problematic behaviors. For counsellors within this field, treatment poses a great challenge and for the unaware noncounsellor it is my perception that they feel work in this area should be abandoned for legal penalties. It is my belief that a balance must be maintained between an awareness of the possible danger from an adolescent sibling sexual offender and a recognition of the hurt and troubled person within.

As I read through the scarce amount of literature on this topic, I often wondered what the world was like from their perspective; what their experiences were like in terms of their thoughts and feelings around the time of their offending and how they perceived counselling changed those aspects. Was their offending a quest for power, rebellion and retaliation, a lack of empathy and feeling for others or experimentation?

In the past, I have noticed a tremendous amount of shame that surrounds this type of offending and the adolescent perpetrator's anger that surfaces when the youth is brought in for counselling. I believe that in most cases, the adolescent initially feels as though they must "do their time" in therapy; they feel forced into treatment and their passive compliance yields an anger that reveals glimpses of underlying feelings of humiliation and pain. I believe therapy with this population is challenging but not impossible, and my interest in this area is sustained by this belief.

Participants

Due to the qualitative nature of this research and because adolescent sibling sexual offending is infrequently disclosed (DiGiorgio-Miller, 1998), the data was obtained by purposive sampling. This is a strategy of choice when one wants to come to understand a certain phenomenon about specific cases without needing to generalize to all cases (Patton, 1980). The researcher purposefully selects "information-rich" cases that can provide the greatest insight into the topic being investigated and he or she does not attempt to generalize findings to a larger population. In qualitative research, generalization lies in the common or mutual understanding between the reader and the descriptions and interpretations made by the researcher. It is based on empathetic understanding, and it is established *a posteriori* rather than *a priori* (Osborne, 1990).

This sample consisted of three adolescent males who were in treatment for having sexual contact with a biological, step-, or adoptive female sibling. Sibling incest was defined as a sexual interaction between siblings who have one or both parents in common (Loredo, 1982). Participants were selected based on elements deemed theoretically meaningful to the phenomenon being studied. Participants were recruited using the following criteria:

1. All participants were adolescent males between 14 and 17 years of age.
2. The adolescent offenders had one or both parents in common with their victims.
3. The participants were living in the home with the victim during the time of the offense(s).
4. The victim was younger than the age of the offender when the sexual abuse was disclosed.
5. The identified victim of the offender was female. This criterion was selected to control for variability in offenders who abuse male versus female victims (Hartley, 1998).
6. The participants had been convicted of one or more sexual offences toward a female sibling and had concluded any legal proceedings surrounding the sexual abuse.
7. The participants must have completed at least three months of a Sibling Sexual Abuse Treatment Program.

Participants were selected from the Sibling Sexual Abuse Treatment Program at a counselling agency in Edmonton. This program involves a team of therapists who provide an on-going group therapy program that incorporates individual and family therapy. It is an open-ended treatment program, and entrance criteria include adolescent male sibling sexual offenders, between the ages of 12 to 18, who have acknowledged their offense(s) to some degree. The program also requires a prior assessment and is not designed for adolescents who are violent or have been diagnosed with severe psychopathology. Some of the group program components include disclosure and acknowledgement of the offending, victim impact awareness, understanding offense patterns, and identifying and minimizing high-risk situations.

Participants were chosen from this program based on how well they fit the above criteria (numbers 1 to 7), their openness to describing their thoughts, feelings, and experiences with regard to their offense(s), their willingness to be involved in the study and have interviews tape-recorded, and their ability to communicate in an in-depth manner the phenomenon under question. Two therapists involved with the participants throughout the treatment program assisted in the selection with regard to participants' level of defensiveness, willingness, openness, and ability to convey experiences. In total four individuals were interviewed. However, the interview of one participant was not used in the data analysis phase, as he appeared to communicate his thoughts and feelings at a surface level. Heterogeneity of the sample was captured in that each participant was at a different stage in treatment. The first participant was between the middle to end stage of treatment, the second participant was in the process of graduating from the treatment program, and the third participant had recently graduated from treatment program.

Procedure

The first step in this study was gaining permission from both the participants' and the participants' parent(s) or guardian(s). Each participant and parent/guardian was contacted and oriented to the study. I explained to them the purpose and nature of the study, and I informed them that they would receive letters of information (see Appendix A) and permission forms (see Appendix B) before the onset of the interview process. The letters of information clearly explained the study and listed contact numbers in case there were further questions. It was emphasized that participation in this study was completely voluntary and that they were free to withdraw from the study at any time until data analysis had begun. The difference between a research interview and therapy was made clear, and participants were told that if they chose to withdraw from the study it would in no way impact their involvement in present or future therapy or assessments. I explained that the study would entail two interviews and that if at any point they felt uncomfortable with a certain question they could decline to respond. Participants were informed that all interviews would be tape-recorded, and that the tapes would be erased and destroyed after the study was completed. It was stressed that anonymity would be protected and that they would have the opportunity to select a pseudonym to be used throughout the study. I explained that participants may benefit from this study by having the opportunity to explore their own thoughts, feelings, beliefs, perceptions, and attitudes with regard to their offense(s), by coming to a greater understanding about them, and by having the opportunity to provide information that may assist in future research and treatment of adolescents who have committed an offense(s) of a sexual nature.

The interviews were held in a private counselling room at the University of Alberta Education Clinic and at Ian MacKenzie and Associates. Before an interview begins it is important as a phenomenological researcher to first develop rapport with participants as well as a comfortable, open atmosphere. Before the first interview I reviewed elements of the permission and information forms that were previously signed by each participant and discussed any further questions or comments that they had. I explained how my interest in this study developed, and the purpose of the study was also reviewed. It was pointed out that the data provided in this research project would be used in a thesis, which is a requirement for completion of a Master of Education degree in Counselling Psychology, and possibly other publications.

The first data-gathering interviews lasted 60 to 90 minutes, and the second interviews lasted approximately 30 to 60 minutes. An interview guide was followed, which provides a framework to ensure that the same basic information is obtained from participants by covering the same material (see Appendix C). Interviews, however, took a more conversational, semi-structured format to allow me the opportunity to explore, probe, and ask further questions that would illuminate the particular phenomenon (Patton, 1980). This gives the researcher maximum flexibility in that questions can be asked in a variety of directions based on the information that emerges, and it allows the interviewer to be responsive to individual differences and situational changes (Patton, 1980). The interview questions were open-ended. For example, in the first question participants were asked, "tell me about yourself." This format increases the possibility of producing information that may otherwise be overlooked (Osborne, 1990). Participants were also asked not to describe what they thought the researcher wanted to hear or what they believed a correct answer would be but to let the answers flow from their thoughts, feelings, and beliefs. Due to the possibly emotion-laden content of the interviews, careful consideration was given to diffuse potentially unmanageable material; this entailed offering support, validating feelings, taking long pauses before responding, or moving on to a different type of question. To enhance the quality of the data and prevent misunderstanding during the course of each interview, I asked further clarifying questions, checked personal interpretations of what was being explained, and reiterated the main points of each interview. This also encourages the participant to elaborate on prior statements, and it avoids painting a superficial picture of them as individuals (Haggman-Laitila, 1999). Careful attention was not only given to verbal descriptions and tone of voice, but also to nonverbal expressions such as body and facial expressions.

After each interview was completed I recorded data on a contact summary sheet such as the date, how long each interview lasted, dates/times of phone calls, and the pseudonym used. Field notes were also recorded, which included gestures, expressions, overt behaviors, and other observable data that can not be auditorily detected. In this sense the researcher can "relive" the discussions, rechecking and deepening understanding as well as aiding interpretation of the experiences (Haggman-Laitila, 1999). Overall impressions, personal reflections, reactions, judgments, and insights were also recorded in a journal throughout the research process. The combination of the contact summary sheet, field notes, reflective journal, and transcripts provided an audit trail to follow the process of the research project.

Data Analysis

Data analysis in phenomenological research is an iterative process that involves working inferentially and systematically with the data to produce a final written account (Froggatt, 2001). In phenomenological research a variety of ways have been articulated to analyze data to determine and explain the essence of the experience being described by the participant. In this research study the phenomenological method described by Giorgi (1997), Osborne (1990) and Colaizzi (1978) was used. The steps of the data analysis process are outlined below:

1. Each interview was tape-recorded and listened to prior to transcribing it into a written format by the researcher. Field notes accompanied each interview and careful attention was given to elements of verbal expression such as tone of voice, repetition and emphasis of particular words and phrases, long silent pauses, flow of the dialogue, and rate of speech. To a great extent, the quality of the data is determined by the manner of discussion between the researcher and the participant as well as their understanding of the phenomenon. It is important, therefore, that the same researcher both collects the interview data and undertakes the procedure of transcription and analysis (Hagman-Laitila, 1999).
2. The next step involved reading the entire transcript several times to gain a sense of the whole experience. Developing a "global sense" of the transcript is crucial for determining how the elements are established (Giorgi, 1997). This assists in getting a feeling for how aspects of the phenomenon function constitutively, and how they interrelate to form the unity of the experience (Reed, 1987). It also serves as a facilitative factor for the next step in data analysis.

3. A master copy of each transcript was retained and another copy of each transcript was read once more with the specific aim of extracting significant phrases or "meaningful units" that were relevant to the phenomenon being studied. These extracted phrases were underlined and structured into a tabular format and coded. Coding is a fundamental process of assigning labels or indexing smaller units of data so that upon reorganization of data, it can always be traced to its original source (Froggatt, 2001). As suggested by Colaizzi (1978), it was at this point that redundant phrases were eliminated.
4. In the next column of the table, each extraction was paraphrased while retaining as much of the participant's original wording from the transcript as possible.
5. In the last column of the table, each paraphrase was transformed into one or more themes. In this stage the theme(s) remained descriptive, and they were coded to correspond with the original extractions taken from the transcript. Themes are validated by referring back to the original transcript to assess if any information was omitted or meaning conveyed that is not present in the transcript (Hein & Austin, 2001). It was at this point that validity was addressed by referring back to the original transcript to ensure that the true meaning is accurately presented in each theme. When the above process of one participant's interviews was completed the researcher began this process with the next participant's set of interviews.
6. The themes are then clustered into higher-order themes (second-order themes). This was achieved by combining the first-order themes into clusters that shared a common, higher-order theme. They were again presented in a tabular format with the first-order themes appearing on the left and the second-order themes appearing on the right (see

Appendix D - F for First and Second-Order Themes). Once again the researcher referred back to the original transcript to ensure that relevant information was not eliminated or that meaning not present in the transcript was not implied in the themes.

7. An analysis was conducted by synthesizing, in a written description (also called a structural description), each participant's transcript taking into consideration the first-order and second-order themes that evolved. Using Giorgi's method, one does not include the common step of having the participant evaluate or elaborate the structural descriptions (Hein & Austin, 2001). In this sense the researcher obtains raw, unguarded data from that specific "snapshot" in time. The researcher again created higher-order themes (otherwise called third-order themes) and compared them to the original transcript for accuracy; this higher-order cluster of themes "defines the structure of the phenomenon" (Osborne, 1990).
8. In the last stage, an analysis between the participant's themes was conducted; this involves the generation of fourth-order themes using the themes developed from each participant's analysis. It is at this stage that more encompassing themes shared by all participants are derived.

In phenomenological research the process of data analysis requires iterative movement between different aspects in order to create a rigorous and final written account as seen in Figure 3 (Froggatt, 2001). It is primarily an inductive process, meaning that patterns and themes emerge from the data rather than being imposed prior to data collection and analysis (Patton, 1980).

It does, however, entail a deductive aspect in that there is a continuous re-examination of the data or transcripts, accurate methodology, evolving questions, and themes developed (Froggatt, 2001).

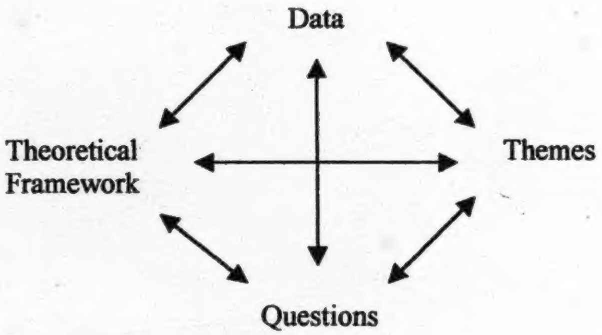
Data
Theoretical Framework
Themes
Questions

Figure 3. Iterative Process in Data Analysis (Frogatt, 2001)

Chapter Four

Data Analysis and Results

A phenomenological research method was chosen to elucidate the unique experiences of adolescents who sexually offend against a sibling in terms of their thoughts and beliefs present before, during, and after the sexual abuse, and the adolescent sibling sexual offender's awareness and understanding of the thoughts and beliefs changing as a result of counselling. The literature in this area has defined and categorized adolescent sibling sexual abuse, identified common characteristics of adolescent sexual offenders, suggested prevalence rates, and described dysfunctional familial patterns common to adolescent sibling sexual offenders. Treatment interventions used with adolescent sexual offenders and the effectiveness of treatment interventions have also been studied. Additional research is needed, however, to strengthen the literature on the experiences of adolescent sibling sexual offenders.

Participants for this study were three white adolescent males, ages 14 to 17 years old who were presently in treatment or just recently completed treatment for having sexual contact with a biological, step-, or adoptive female sibling. At the onset of the interviews each participant chose a pseudonym that is used throughout this study in order to protect their anonymity. The following presents a brief description of each participant, analysis of each participant's experience with regard to the phenomenon under question, shared common themes, and finally the higher level abstractions representing the overall themes of the phenomenon.

Introduction to the Participants

Olaf

Olaf was a seventeen-year-old adolescent who was completing a treatment program for sexually offending against his younger step-sister, who was six years of age at the time. Currently, Olaf resides in a group home but hopes to be living with his mother by the end of the summer. He described the beginning of his school year as being "messed up" because he was "jerked out of school" and placed in a young offender's treatment center. He is presently doing correspondence and is trying to get back into school for the next semester. He is most interested in the social sciences, English, massage therapy, and computer game programming, and he wishes to begin a career in one of these areas.

Olaf described the time around the offending as a very low point in his life. He commented on feeling responsible for a downward spiral of events such as financial problems, worsening parental relationships, and problems in school. He also described little social interaction with friends and physically, verbally, and sexually abusive situations at home. Olaf indicated that after the offending was found out and he entered therapy, "life started to rearrange itself and get better." He stated, "since things came out I've worked hard on getting my life in order, getting school done and that sort of thing."

Dave

Dave was a sixteen-year-old adolescent who, at the time of the interview, was graduating from a treatment program for committing past sibling sexual offenses. Dave had offended against a foster sister who was approximately four years of age at the time. Prior to that he also sexually offended against a half sister and a different foster sister.

He currently resides in a group home, attends school, and is looking for a job. Dave indicated that in the past he experienced academic failure due to skipping classes, drinking, and doing drugs. Presently, Dave hopes to graduate from grade twelve, live independently, and in the future complete a post-secondary program. He also serves as a mentor for young group members going through the treatment program he recently completed.

Dave is the oldest of five siblings, and he commented on acting as the parent for two of them when he was still a child himself. He stated that "it helped me to be a lot more mature for my age than many other guys my age." Dave described very little stability in the past five years of his life. He had been living in numerous foster homes until the age of fourteen when he was placed in his first group home. He also described being abused physically, sexually, and psychologically by many people in his life. Since counselling began, Dave indicated experiencing much change. He stated, "it's a tremendous change, massive... and I'm making the most out of my life now. Like doing whatever I can to have a better life."

Karl

Karl was almost sixteen when I interviewed him. He had recently graduated from a treatment program for sexually offending against his half-sister, who was about seven years of age at the time. Karl grew up in a rural community and presently lives with his father on a farm. He attends school and feels good about beginning high school next year. Karl mentioned that he enjoys sports and farming, and that when he graduates he may pursue a career in the military, farming, or oil industry. In general, he hopes, "everybody around me will enjoy having me."

Karl is the second oldest of five other siblings. He indicated coming from a divorced family and living with his biological mother for the first eight years of his life and then moving to live with his father. Growing up Karl remembers his parents fighting a lot, and not being able to express his feelings without getting yelled at. He stated that when he lived with his mother she drank, did drugs, and had several boyfriends in the house, in which he experienced much physical abuse. He indicated that he was "practically finding food out of garbage cans and rarely attending school." Karl described changing as a result of counselling, but that it was hard work. He stated that, "you can't do it half-heartedly or else you end up at square one." Karl felt glad to complete group counselling and be with peers his own age. He also felt excited to move on in life, but realizes there is help available when he needs it.

Analysis of the Participants' Experiences

Analysis of Olaf's Experience

Eleven themes were identified from the analysis of Olaf's thoughts and beliefs around the time of the offending and how they have changed as a result of counselling. These themes were: (1) Desire for Power and Control, (2) Care and Concern for Sibling, (3) Disconnection from Thoughts and Emotions, (4) Normalized and Minimized Offending, (5) Felt Depressed, (6) Belief that Own Sexual Abuse was a Factor in the Offending, (7) Set Self Up for Failure, (8) Feelings of Guilt and Responsibility, (9) Apprehension and Relief upon Discovery of Offending, (10) Initially Thought Counselling was Not Needed, and (11) Experienced Positive Change from Counselling.

The levels of thematic analysis of Olaf's experience are presented in Appendix D. Each interview with Olaf was transcribed and excerpts from the interviews that reflect the phenomenon are presented in the first column in the order they appeared in the interview. The second column is a paraphrase of each excerpt, which helps gain focus for the development of a first-order theme presented in the third column. Each theme is coded so that it can be traced to its original excerpt (i.e., O1.3 = Olaf excerpt 1, theme 3). Following this is the second level of abstraction in which the first-order themes are presented in the left column and the second-order themes (higher-level themes) are presented in the right column. The eleven themes identified from the data analysis are discussed below.

Desire for power and control. Olaf described the time around the offending as a point in his life where things were getting worse and worse. He commented on experiencing many stresses at that point and losing control of himself in the process. Olaf believed that he was to blame for certain events that were occurring around the time of the offending such as problems in his mother's relationship with her common-law husband and his father's and step-mother's financial difficulties. He also had some difficulties at the beginning of the school year and believes that it led to "a cascade effect of messing up the entire year." Olaf stated that at that point he was trying to get his life back in order, to gain some control, and help the people in his life that were important to him. Although Olaf did not feel good about offending, he believed that from it he temporarily gained a sense of control and power. Olaf stated,

> I don't think I ever felt entirely good about what I was doing, but I felt good about the fact that there was something in my life I could control. Something that I had power over, that I can deal with on my level, on my choices, without having it go

> wrong. It seemed like because I have this power I can do what I want with it and I think that was foremost on my mind.

Care and concern for sibling. Olaf described expressing care and concern for his sibling before, during, and after the offending. He stated, "Even during the time I was offending against her I never actually intended to hurt her, and I still care a great deal for her." Olaf believed that his relationship with his sister was always very good. He talked about being protective over his younger sister, but that during the time of the offending he noticed feeling apprehensive and very unhappy with himself around her. He noticed that she was "becoming sort of addicted to this behavior" and felt concern over her feelings of rejection after each offense. Olaf believed that his sister thought it was another sense of being close, and being connected with somebody; if it was in a good way or a bad way she did not understand. Olaf believed that it would be best if he distanced himself from her to try and hide from the negative thoughts and feelings he was experiencing. At the same time Olaf described becoming more aware of her actions, and he tried to make sure that she did not tell anyone about the offending.

Disconnection from thoughts and emotions. During the time of the offending Olaf described a disconnection from his thoughts and feelings. He discussed how he knew that what he was doing was wrong, and how he would often tell himself that he would never do it again, yet his drive for power and control in his life persisted and he would lock away those thoughts only to offend again. Olaf used a metaphor to describe how he would create distance from his thoughts and feelings. He stated,

> I'd always tell myself that I'd never do it again, then shortly after that I would take a little box and throw all the thoughts in there, the thoughts inside of my head, and

> I wouldn't face them at all anymore... So, the thing that was foremost on my mind would be a sense of distance from it again.

Olaf went on to discuss how distancing himself from his thoughts and emotions resulted in him believing that nothing happened and that by believing this he did not feel hurt. He tried to avoid the unhappiness he felt with himself and stated that he would also "kind of transfer it on to her." After placing unwanted thoughts and feelings in a little box he stated that he would set them on a shelf and forget about them and that "once they are on the shelf they don't matter." He believed that he stopped caring and felt as though he was in a "dead space" or a bad dream where everything was surreal. Olaf further described this disconnection by stating, "It seemed like it was happening somewhere really far away, and because of that it wasn't my domain. I didn't need to worry about it because it wasn't right there in front of me."

Normalized and minimized offending. Olaf indicated that during the offending he felt that his sister was not objecting to it because she did not understand that it was wrong and she did not feel any guilt. He believed that she thought they were just being a good brother and sister and that because he was not physically harming her the behavior was okay. During the time of the offending he also believed that he did not have any strengths and therefore could not stop himself. He also stated, "I thought, oh well she's not objecting so it's okay and it happened to me so it's okay." Olaf discussed how it felt like the offending became just another normal part of the downward spiral of negative events happening in his life that he did not have control over. He indicated how he did not want to accept that it was wrong or that he was even offending. Olaf stated, "...on the exterior of that it seemed absolutely normal because I was ignoring it." He also described what his thoughts were when he initially began counselling:

> I was still partially rationalizing and minimizing and all that… I thought these people are nothing like me because I was special, my offending was unique, and I didn't do nearly as bad as these guys did…

Felt depressed. Olaf felt that right before and during the offending was the lowest and harshest point in his life where he "hit rock bottom." He was not doing well academically and he expressed "a lack of friends or any sort of pure interaction." He believed he was to blame for all the problematic events happening at home, and he thought that he lacked the ability to accomplish anything that was important or anything that had meaning. Olaf also indicated that during the offending he began to loath himself for what he was doing. He stated,

> I was suffering from low self-esteem. I was constantly depressed. I turned into a chronic depressive at that point. I was having thoughts of suicide - never actually going to commit it but the thoughts were there, feelings of worthlessness…

Belief that own sexual abuse was a factor in offending. In this theme Olaf described incidences when he was abused as a child. He discussed living with his mother and the boyfriends she had who would physically and verbally abuse him as well as his mother. Olaf stated,

> He hurt me physically and verbally and because of that it caused lots of damage to me and I'd end up with bruises and he'd cause me all sorts of emotional difficulties between me and my mother because he'd do the same thing to her except more physical violence.

Olaf also mentioned being sexually abused and that it has had a lasting effect on him. He feels that it has made him a more sarcastic and cynical person than he would like to be and that it makes him do things that sometimes harm others. Olaf described the sexual abuse he encountered as a child this way: "It seemed just like another close thing for us to do, but I think it changed something in me and it's also a contributing factor to what I did to my sister." Olaf believes this is an important factor in his life and one that he tries to get help with now as much as possible.

Set self up for failure. In this theme Olaf indicated that during the time of the offending things would not go the way he wanted them to. He believed that right before each offense he was aware of everything that was happening in his life. He knew "everything that was going wrong and everything that was going right." Olaf believed that there were more things in his life that were going wrong than right and he stated, "it just wasn't worth going for anything any more." Olaf believed that trying to make things work out positively in his life was hopeless and he would set himself up for failure. He stated, "I intentionally sabotaged things so that they'd go wrong, and just figured that my life's already going to hell I might as well let it continue."

Feelings of guilt and responsibility. Olaf discussed how during and after the offending he would feel tremendous amounts of guilt and responsibility for his behavior. While spending time with his sister the feelings of guilt would increase to the point where he would have to leave and he began to distance himself from her in order to avoid the negative feelings. He stated, "I'd notice that every time I'd be around her I'd feel… well a lot of guilt, and because of that I'd distance myself from her as much as possible." Olaf believed that as time passed after the offending he came to realize that this behavior was his choice and that he was responsible for his actions. He believed that he came to feel empathetic towards his sister and a deep sense of regret for the offending. Olaf feels that he is honest with himself and he is willing to take entire responsibility for his actions. Olaf stated, "...and as I deal with things now, I'm willing to face myself with complete honesty and realize that what I did was wrong." He also commented, "Most of all, the thoughts that come back are thoughts of what I can do to change or correct any of that...I can do everything I can to heal the problems as much as possible."

Apprehension and relief upon discovery of the offending. In this theme Olaf discussed feeling apprehensive when the offending was found out. Olaf discussed how he and others saw him as usually having a good "moral compass", and that he often questions how the offending could have happened. But when the offending was discovered he was uncertain about how his life would proceed from that point and how others would see him, yet he also was relieved because he no longer had to hide. Olaf stated,

> I think I also felt a sense of apprehension because this can go really badly and sort of mess up my life entirely, but I also felt a sense of relief knowing because I'm no longer hiding. It's no longer going to be on my mind alone and if things continue then maybe both of us can actually get better.

Olaf believed that when the offending was found out he had no choice but to talk about what was going on, to face the offending, and get help so that he would not reoffend. He believed that he no longer had to deal with this difficult issue on his own and he felt relief that he could at least talk to someone about it. Olaf also stated, "I had no choice and as I faced it more and more I realized that while it was really difficult to face, I could face it."

Initially thought counselling was not needed. After the offending was discovered Olaf was brought to group counselling and he described how initially he thought counselling was useless and a waste of time. Olaf felt forced to attend counselling, and he believed that being in a group setting with other peers was not going to benefit him and he tried to stay separate and disconnected himself from others. Olaf discussed how he thought he did not belong in therapy "what so ever." He stated,

> It made me just kind of brush off therapy as a place that I had to go for two hours a week, and I'd pretend to do that two hours and I'd be fine. It took me a long time for that to go away. So when I originally entered group I just kind of was lousy in finding my way and I just didn't think it was worth while to me.

As Olaf stayed in therapy he began to notice changes within himself, and he became aware of his need for counselling. He noticed similarities between himself and other group members and began thinking that "therapy wasn't a bad place to be."

Experienced positive change from counselling. An important element of Olaf's experience was the positive change that occurred as a result of his participation in counselling. Olaf indicated that he noticed many improvements upon entering therapy and a gradual change in his thinking. He began to notice similarities between himself and other group members, and he believed that his peer group was a factor that helped influence the positive change. In this theme Olaf indicated that therapy has opened his mind to the benefits that social interaction has in a group setting. He described becoming more open with others and aware of his need for group counselling. He stated,

> Now I realize that I do belong in this group because the group's goal is to get better, to get healthy, and that's what I need. The group is very helpful for that, and I'm very similar to most guys in group.

Olaf acknowledged that he experienced many positive changes since he began to actively participate in group counselling such as an increase in self-awareness, self-esteem, confidence in his abilities, and trust in others such as his parents. Olaf believes his perception of the future has changed and he feels more positive about it, which has created the motivation to move forward in life. Olaf also described how he often thinks about wanting to correct or change the past and continue to help himself get better and learn to make positive decisions for himself.

Overall Analysis of Olaf's Experience

Many stresses were occurring in Olaf's life before and during the offending. He felt that he was to blame for certain circumstances and the downward spiral of negative events happening during that time. Olaf tried to gain control over his environment, and he believed that the offending gave him a temporary sense of power and control.

Olaf believed that before the offending occurred he had a good relationship with his sister and he expressed much care and concern for her. He commented that as the offending progressed he still felt care and concern for her, and that he never intended to harm her. He also felt protective of her and he became more aware of her actions around the time of the offending. Olaf thought she would see it as another way of being close or connected. He thought that she eventually became addicted to it and that she felt a sense of rejection after each offense.

Olaf described how he knew the offending was wrong and he would tell himself that he would never to it again. Shortly after, however, he would distance himself from those thoughts and negative emotions. He believed that he stopped caring about the things around him and he felt like he was in a dead space or a bad dream.

During the time of the offending Olaf felt like he did not have any strengths and therefore could not stop offending. He believed that his sister was not objecting to the offending because she did not understand that it was wrong and therefore she did not feel guilty about it. He also believed that his sibling thought they were just being a good brother and sister and that because he was not physically harming her it was okay to let the behavior continue.

Feelings of depression and thoughts of suicide began to develop during the time around the offending. This seemed like the lowest point in Olaf's life. He was not doing well in school, had no social interaction with friends, was experiencing difficulties at home, and believed he lacked the ability to accomplish anything positive in his life.

Olaf indicated that as a child he experienced much physical and verbal abuse. He also believed that being sexually abused has had a lasting effect on him. He indicated that it has made him a more sarcastic and cynical person, and it sometimes makes him harm others. Olaf indicated that he believes this was a contributing factor in his own offending.

Olaf believed that right before each offense he became more aware of the events that were occurring in his life. He thought that there were more things in his life that were going wrong than right, and that trying to change circumstances for the better was hopeless. He intentionally made decisions that he knew were wrong and he would set himself up for failure.

During the offending Olaf felt more and more guilt and regret for his behavior. Olaf believed that eventually he came to feel empathetic towards his sister and that he was responsible for the choices he made. Olaf was relieved when the offending was discovered. He believed that now he had no choice but to stop offending, face what he had done, and get help. Olaf also felt somewhat apprehensive during this time because he was unsure how his life would proceed from then on.

At the onset of group counselling Olaf thought that he did not belong in that particular type of setting and that therapy with peers was useless. He felt forced to attend and brushed it off as just a place to go once a week. Gradually, however, Olaf noticed similarities between himself and his peers and changes in his thinking. He became more open to the idea of counselling and eventually acknowledged the need for it in his life. As a result of counselling he experienced positive changes such as increased self-esteem and confidence in his abilities, greater self-awareness, and the motivation to move forward in life. He has also gained more trust in others such as his parents and a positive sphere of friends that he feels comfortable expressing himself with. Olaf often thinks about wanting to correct or change the past, but he realizes that he must think about what he can do in the present, through counselling, to help himself and others.

Analysis of Dave's Experience

Nine themes were identified from the analysis of Dave's thoughts and beliefs around the time of the offending and how they have changed as a result of counselling. These themes were: (1) Belief that Ill Thinking Resulted from Not Dealing with Own Abuse, (2) Made Decisions Harmful to Self, (3) Lack of Boundaries and Knowledge a Factor in Offending, (4) Did Not Care About Self, (5) Feelings of Guilt and

Responsibility, (6) Care and Concern for Sibling, (7) Felt Apprehensive at the Onset of Counselling, (8) Experienced Positive Change from Counselling, and (9) Group Home and Maturity as Additional Factors of Change.

The levels of thematic analysis of Dave's experience are presented in Appendix E. Each interview with Dave was transcribed and excerpts from the interviews that reflect the phenomenon are presented in the first column in the order they appeared in the interview. The second column is a paraphrase of each excerpt, which helps gain focus for the development of a first-order theme presented in the third column. Each theme is coded so that it can be traced to its original excerpt (i.e., D1.3 = Dave excerpt 1, theme 3). Following this is the second level of abstraction in which the first-order themes are presented in the left column and the second-order themes (higher-level themes) are presented in the right column. The nine themes found from the data analysis are discussed below.

Belief that ill thinking resulted from not dealing with own abuse. Dave discussed experiencing much physical, verbal, and sexual abuse by a number of different people in his life before the offending occurred. He believes that at some level he has carried the abuse, mistreatment, and neglect with him and that in the past he dealt with it negatively by bottling it up and never expressing to anyone what had happened. Dave stated that after he was abused he never thought about it. He "just left it alone and didn't go there." Dave indicated,

> When I offended ...I was fourteen. I still had a lot of abuse in my life that I hadn't dealt with. I've been sexually abused about three years prior to that, and I never

> disclosed, never talked about it. I withheld it from everyone. So I had a lot of things that I hadn't dealt with which kind of skewed my perception of the world.

Dave described that by not dealing with his own abuse a "sickness in his head" was created. He believed that he was in a "constant state of ill thinking" which was a contributing factor that led him to offend against his foster sister. Dave wishes not to use his state of "ill thinking" as an excuse for offending, but he believes there were a combination of factors and that he had the ultimate decision or choice to offend.

Made decisions harmful to self. In this theme Dave discussed his belief that he has always made decisions in life that were harmful to him. He feels that at times these choices were unintentional and were a result of his impulsive tendencies and past abuse. At other times they were deliberate choices to be negative and harmful. Dave commented that,

> One thing throughout my life that I've always done is shoot myself in the foot. Whenever something is going pretty good I would kind of sabotage it, and not even on purpose. I would just make a mistake and it would mess it up.

Dave believes that during the offending he was not thinking about anything in order "to not feel bad about doing it as to not do it." He believes he was "acting without thinking" and blocked any thoughts that occurred about not offending. He feels that he has made many mistakes and has done many negative things in life as a result of not thinking or acting on impulse before considering the consequences.

Lack of boundaries and knowledge a factor in offending. Dave discussed incidences before the offending that he believed reflected a lack of familial boundaries and knowledge of what was right and wrong within family relationships. For example, he remembers his mother sending him to get money from her bank account to purchase drugs and asking him to take nude photographs of her. Dave indicated,

> ... my mom has a really poor sense of boundaries, and I learned that as well from my mom, big time. So, at the time, I didn't really know that what I was doing was very wrong. It didn't really cross my mind.

Dave believes that because this behavior was a part of his family environment he did not completely understand that it was wrong. He also believes that he has learned a poor sense of boundaries as a result, which Dave feels "was part of what led toward offending." Dave commented, "With my lack of knowledge of boundaries and appropriateness that's kind of what well, I hesitate to say, allowed me to do that."

Did not care about self. In this theme Dave indicated that before and during the offending he was not happy with himself at all. He believed he did not care about what happened to himself or other people, and he thinks that this was also a part of his offending. Dave described it this way:

> I don't think I ever really loved myself until maybe, I don't know, six months ago. So that was another thing is that I didn't really give a shit about what happened to me, and if you don't care about what happens to you why should you care about what happens to other people right? So I think that was part of my offending too was that, you know, I didn't care about myself at all, therefore, I didn't care about anyone else and I had no compassion.

Feelings of guilt and responsibility. Feelings of guilt and responsibility were present for Dave during and after the offending. Dave wished that he could have been taught right from wrong at a younger age and had people who were there for him so that he would have known better and so that this would never have happened. Dave also wished that he could take back each offense, and he sometimes finds it to hard to believe that he committed this type of offense - that it is sort of like an "unbelief" to him that he did this. Dave stated that after each offense he felt much remorse, and his thoughts were "just like no, no, no, no, no!" after realizing what he did. He commented that,

> ...I acted and didn't think and then after I started thinking about how ugly it was. So afterwards, it was just like overwhelming guilt and wishing I could take it back, but by then it was too late.

Dave feels that he is an entirely different person now and wishes he could apologize to his sister and explain how the offending was his choice and responsibility. Dave stated,

> I want to tell her that what I did was totally my fault and that I have the most, the most deepest apologetic feelings about that so to lift the burden off her, because I don't want her going through life thinking, oh what did I do to deserve that...

Care and concern for sibling. Dave expressed much care about his foster sister and he wants to be able to look out for her and be concerned for her safety. He feels that he has already done this to some extent, but would like to be able to reestablish a more positive, appropriate relationship with her. Dave indicated,

> I want to be the older brother that will look out for her, really concerned for her safety, and I've actually already done that you know... I'm really concerned for her psychological safety and well being... I'm really looking out for her.

Dave believes that he is ready to explain to his foster sister why the offending occurred, and that she did not deserve what had happened. He hopes that in the future they will be able to depend on each other.

Felt apprehensive at the onset of counselling. Dave indicated that when he disclosed to someone that he was offended against he began feeling much anger and powerlessness, and he felt that he needed to "get it out of his system." It was around this time when he began group counselling, and he felt quite nervous and intimidated to discuss his thoughts and feelings surrounding being offended against and offending against his foster sister. Dave believed that he tried to remain open-minded and see the logic in what other group members were saying. He described his thoughts and feelings about the onset of counselling this way:

> Kind of a bit nerve wracking. A little bit intimidating going in and talking about something so personal and with so much shame around it…and then you start to open up and you find out things that you thought about were not very healthy, or the way you thought about a certain thing, there's a better way to think about it or go about it.

Experienced positive change from counselling. As a result of attending counselling, Dave believes he has experienced many positive changes. He felt that he had a lot of difficult issues to resolve and that it was a slow process, but he described himself as feeling much healthier. Dave presently tries to surround himself with positive things and keep a positive perspective in life. He believes that through counselling he has learned more about himself, which has helped increase his self-acceptance. Dave commented, "…the more I learned about myself the more I liked myself. It's a correlation. The more you like yourself the less likely you are to offend and that's a big correlation." He feels that coming to like himself and being happier with himself is an important aspect of the change he has experienced in counselling. Dave also stated,

> I guess in all I'm just a lot more happier being who I am. I really, really, like myself now, and that's really important. I mean if I still was down in the dumps and you know still didn't feel very good…it would be so easy for me to go back to that place and offend again, but now I feel so good about myself and I understand that I have feelings and so does the rest of the world.

Dave explained that because he cares about himself more, he cares about others more as well. He sees himself as a kind, caring, and compassionate person who can now treat others with dignity and respect. He also commented that he has become more aware of his surroundings, thoughts, and behavior and how he interacts with others.

Overall, Dave believes that because of group counselling he feels different, that there is "a tremendous change" in how he thinks about life and himself. Dave described that he tried to remain open-minded in group counselling and integrate the feedback peers were giving him. He stated that as a result he was able to express himself more and he discovered unhealthy beliefs, which he replaced with better ways of thinking. Dave commented,

> Just being able to express different things that I thought on a topic, getting feedback, some honest straightforward feedback from not only professionals but from others guys in similar situations…helped a lot too. Being able to get that feedback and bounce ideas off other people.

Group home and maturity as additional factors of change. In this theme Dave discussed aspects of the group home he stayed in and maturity as additional factors to counselling that contributed to his change in thoughts and beliefs. Dave indicated that being immediately removed from the same home as his foster sister and being placed in a structured environment such as a group home helped served as a catalyst for change. It helped remove him from chaotic circumstances, and it gave him the opportunity to reflect on his life. He stated, "...I guess since I was out of all the garbage...I wasn't being abused, I kind of had more time to get to know myself." Dave felt that being in a group home was a very different opportunity that made him take a deeper look at himself.

He also described maturity or "just getting older as time goes on" as an additional factor of change in his thoughts and beliefs. Dave feels that he not only learned about maturity inside of group counselling but outside of this setting as well. He believes that he has learned how it effects his communication and relationships with others. Dave stated, "An insight would be the value of maturity and how it affects how you relate to others and how they relate to you. Because if you're very immature then they'll just say, don't even talk to me."

Overall Analysis of Dave's Experience

Dave described many instances of physical, verbal, and sexual abuse by different people in his life before the offending occurred. He believed that by "bottling up" these experiences and not expressing to anyone what had happened he fell into a constant state of "ill thinking", which led him to offend against his foster sister.

Dave feels that he had a pattern of making harmful decisions to himself. At times they were a result of being impulsive and acting without thinking, and at other times they were intentional decisions to be negative. He believes that during the time of the offending he was acting without thinking and not considering the consequences.

He also described a family environment, which he believed lacked appropriate boundaries. He believes that because he grew up in such an environment he did not learn what was right from wrong in familial relationships. The development of poor boundaries and lack of knowledge is what Dave feels contributed to his offending.

During and after the offending Dave did not feel very good about himself or what he had done. He indicated that he did not care what happened to himself and therefore lacked concern and compassion for others, yet he also described feeling a sense of guilt and responsibility after each offense. He wished that he was taught right from wrong at a younger age so that he would have never offended. Dave now wishes he could apologize to his foster sister and explain that it was his fault. He expressed much care and concern about his foster sister's physical and emotional well being. He feels that he wants to reestablish a more positive, appropriate relationship with her, and he hopes that in the future they can depend on each other.

Dave described that at the onset of counselling he was very nervous and intimidated expressing his thoughts and feelings about offending because there was so much shame that encompassed the issue. He decided to keep an open mind about counselling and listen to the feedback his peers in the group were relaying to him. Dave gradually began to notice changes in the way he perceived things. He began to understand that there was a healthier, more positive way of looking at life.

As a result of being in counselling Dave believes that he has experienced tremendous change. He feels healthier, happier about himself, and has more compassion for others. He believes that he has developed more self-acceptance, and he tries to surround himself with positive things and maintain a more positive outlook on life. Dave commented that liking who he is and caring about himself is a correlation to offending. The more he likes who he is the more he cares about others, and the less likely he is to reoffend. Dave also believes that group counselling has helped him express himself, receive informative feedback from peers in similar circumstances, and develop healthier ways of thinking about the world. He has also become more aware of his surroundings, behavior, and interaction with others.

Additional factors that Dave feels has influenced change in his thoughts and beliefs are being placed in a group home immediately after the offending was discovered. Being removed from the same home his foster sister was living in and chaotic circumstances and being placed in a more structured, safe living environment gave Dave the opportunity to take deeper look at himself and the issues he felt he needed to resolve. As well, learning about maturity inside and outside of the group counselling setting was a factor in his experience. Dave believes that "just getting older as time goes on" has helped him realize how it can affect his communication and relationships with others and how others relate to him.

Analysis of Karl's Experience

Seven themes were found from the analysis of Karl's thoughts and beliefs around the time of the offending and how they have changed as a result of counselling. These themes were: (1) Disconnection from Thoughts, Feelings, and Interaction, (2) Negative Thoughts and Feelings Surrounding the Offending, (3) Believed Sibling Wanted Offending to Stop, (4) Did Not Want to Harm Others, (5) Gradual Change in Perspective of Counselling, (6) Experienced Positive Change from Counselling, and (7) Believes Applying Knowledge from Counselling Requires Effort.

The levels of thematic analysis of Karl's experience are presented in Appendix F. Each interview with Karl was transcribed and excerpts from the interviews that reflect the phenomenon are presented in the first column in the order they appeared in the interview. The second column is a paraphrase of each excerpt, which helps gain focus for the development of a first-order theme presented in the third column. Each theme is coded so that it can be traced to its original excerpt (i.e., K1.3 = Karl excerpt 1, theme 3). Following this is the second level of abstraction in which the first-order themes are presented in the left column and the second-order themes (higher-level themes) are presented in the right column. The nine themes found from the data analysis are discussed below.

Disconnection from thoughts, feelings, and interaction. Karl described how before and during the offending he experienced a disconnection from his feelings, thoughts, and interaction with others. He discussed not being allowed to express his feelings at home and that it eventually became harder to talk about things at all. Karl believes that eventually he learned to control his expression of feelings to the point where people were unsure of how he felt. Karl stated, "I used to be gray, like nobody could read me." He also stated, "I had no feelings practically. I could shut my feelings off if I chose to." Karl believes that his emotional needs were not being met at home. Karl stated, "I was being used as more of a slave than anything. I wasn't considered a person. I was just somebody who did work. I couldn't talk about my feelings without getting yelled at." He also stated,

> In the situation I was living in I remember being spanked for crying or thrown down steps for crying. So we just learned that you didn't cry, you didn't say anything. You just went on as if nothing happened.

Karl believes that a disconnection from his thoughts and feelings was a factor in his offending. He believes that during the offending he would "block out" or "bottle up" his thoughts and feelings in order to hide or run from himself and the offending. Karl described it this way:

> …emotionally you didn't want to admit what was going on. You'd sort of run from yourself, you'd hide, and then after you'd throw a pad lock and chain over it, and you'd keep throwing it over until you were sure nobody could get in…all it was was bottling and compressing and getting my mind off what the real truth was.

As well Karl stated, "If I didn't want to cry, I didn't cry…I just sort of bottled it up…I had blocked everything out when I was doing the offense." Karl also described not having very many friends or people to talk to. He believes he distanced himself from others and he stated, "At that time I wasn't very sociable. Like I didn't visit that many friends. It was to the point where I hardly knew how to play tag. I had separated myself that far out…"

Negative thoughts and feelings surrounding the offending. During and after the offending Karl experienced numerous negative thoughts and feelings. He believed that people did not like him and he felt afraid of being abandoned by his family. He described that period of time in his life as very stressful and he believed that offending was like a temporary release of emotional stress, which became harder to stop. After each offense, however, he only felt more stressed. Karl stated,

> I felt really bad to the point were I attempted to kill myself. I was suicidal. I was more stressed out than ever and it made things tight emotionally for me. It was hard to talk to my dad about things.

Karl also described how terrible he felt about what he was doing and that he would often question himself and why he was doing it after each offense. He commented, "After every time I did it I'd keep saying why am I doing this, you know? I'm supposed to be looked up at and here I am lower than what somebody on the street would do."

Believed sibling wanted offending to stop. In this theme Karl described what he thought his sister was experiencing during the offending. He believed that she wanted to help him stop offending without having him removed from the home, but that she did not know how. He believed she felt helpless and was unsure of what to do. Karl stated,

> I think she wanted to help me, but she didn't know how. She felt helpless, and uncertain of what she should do…like afterwards I said if I ever do this again tell somebody…how can I stop him to offend without telling mom and dad and having him removed from the home, because they love me, they like me there because I did a lot of chores for them.

He also stated, "…she would be quiet and it got to the point that sometimes she'd be sick when I was around just because she was afraid, because she didn't know what to do." Over all, he believed his sister hoped the offending would not reoccur. Karl commented, "She was just going about her daily tasks and after the first few offenses probably hoping that it didn't happen again."

Did not want to harm others. Karl believed that at some point during the offending he began to experience changes in that he wanted to get help and he wanted the offending to stop. He expressed care and concern for his sister and believed that he was very protective over her. He felt guilty about offending and began realizing the harm he was inflicting not only on himself and his sister but on his family as well. Karl stated,

> …I knew I didn't want to offend again. I know that's not me, and that my parents they love me and they want to see me succeed, and I don't like hurting people. I

> just realized I was hurting more than just myself, I was hurting everybody around me instead of protecting them.

Gradual change in perspective of counselling. Karl found the onset of group counselling very difficult. He described not being able to talk, not knowing what feelings were or how to express them in the group, and lacking trust in everyone except his father. Karl commented, "I didn't trust them and I had to get used to the fact that there was nobody out there to get me." He believed that everybody thought there was no hope for him because he would not say anything. He commented,

> It was hard. It was different. I was suspicious, and I didn't trust anyone. I just sat there like a stone and just listened to what everybody said. I didn't talk much. It was just about a nerve wreck for me...

Karl discussed feeling bored and frustrated at first because he was unsure what people wanted him to do or say. He also felt afraid and nervous about looking foolish in front of his peers by trying to express his feelings and his thoughts. He stated,

> At first it was painful and frustrating because I was nervous and I'd never done it before, and what happens if you mess up and look like a fool. But after a while it felt good. X uses a metaphor that it's like a sliver when you pour peroxide on it, on the cut. It burns but after it's healed it feels way better...

Karl described that through individual counselling he learned about emotions and that it was important to become aware of them. He believed that he had to acknowledge his thoughts and feelings before anyone could help him. Karl believed,

> I was practically killing myself by not being able to talk. It's a no win situation if you don't talk. If you talk you can cover some ground, if you don't you're lost,

> you don't know what to do… you're digging yourself a grave.

Gradually, Karl found it easier to express himself, and he became more comfortable in group counselling when he realized that he was not the only one who offended and that his peers had similar thoughts, feelings, and issues to face. Karl stated,

> I remember when I went in, I thought I was the only one…and it turns out there's hundreds of us who make the same mistake. A lot of us are afraid, but we get to know one another and we practically talk as if we've lived with each other for years.

Toward the later part of group counselling Karl felt that it had become a part of his life. He enjoyed group counselling, and he was glad that he stayed and completed the program. At the same time he felt excited about leaving and moving on with life. Karl stated, "I enjoyed being with the group, and I was excited about leaving the group too…I'm really glad I've stayed for as long as I did."

Experienced positive change from counselling. Karl believed that he experienced much change and personal growth as a result of counselling. He felt that because he had difficulty expressing his thoughts and feelings, starting with individual counselling would be easier and a better transition into group counselling. He was afraid that by not being able to talk about how he felt he might lose his family and cause additional problems. He began writing his feelings down and talking with his peers in group counselling about what he wrote. Karl believed that writing his thoughts and feelings down "was the key" to opening up and sharing what his experiences were. He believed that he gradually "grew into group counselling and learned that it would be alright to talk with peers." He also stated that the confidentiality, respect, and understanding that was expressed in counselling made it easier to share his experiences. Eventually Karl felt relief being able to express himself and a sense of progress which influenced further change. Karl described knowing his thoughts and feelings at some level before and after the offending but that he would distance himself from them. He felt glad that in counselling, these thoughts and feelings were something he had to face and talk about and that peers would challenge him and bring issues out from a different perspective.

Since counselling, Karl has been able to seek forgiveness from his sister, and he believes that he needs to remain aware of his emotions and be open and honest about them. He states that,

> Since counselling, I've tried to be more open, to be more honest. I'm not gray, I'm black and white and I've got a bit of gray strips like everybody has. It revolved around. I need to be honest, responsible and talk, and care for others.

Karl believes that he is now continuously aware of high-risk situations. He feels the ability to work harder and move on with life knowing that if he does make a mistake he can get help. Karl stated,

> I'm able to work harder, and not do stupid things. I can actually go about something knowing that if I mess up I know I'm not going to get bit on. I go now without fear that if I mess up I'm not going to hurt somebody, and if I do I've got a problem.

Karl also mentioned learning strategies in dealing with his emotions and feels relief knowing that if he needs additional help he can go back for more counselling. He stated, "Since I started and finished counselling I've picked up tools on how to deal with my stress and my anger, and I know I'm welcome to come back here if I need more help."

Counselling seen as hard work. In this theme Karl believed that being in counselling and applying what he had learned was hard work. He feels that in group counselling it was easy to talk about what he should do, but it was harder to actually go out and do it. Karl believes that life is more difficult outside of the counselling setting, and he described being somewhat "shocked" when he tried to apply what he had learned in therapy to situations outside of group counselling. Karl stated,

> When you're in with the group it's easy to talk the talk, but it's harder to walk the walk. I figured for the first little while, yah, yah, I'll do this, just at first it was so I could get out of group... but then you get into life and it's a shock just about because you've got to apply it.

Karl believes that he views life a little differently now. He believes that sometimes "life is not fair to everyone", but that people determine their own future and they control their own life, which requires hard work and effort. He stated,

> I look at it as if life's not fair to everyone. What you get, you have to live with, and you practically determine what your future is going to hold. If you want to live in an abusive situation you control that. If you want to be an abuser then you are an abuser.

He believes that being successful involves helping oneself and that in counselling being successful also requires parental involvement and support. Karl believes that parents need to know the warning signs and be aware of their son/daughter's thoughts and feelings in order to help him/her not reoffend. Karl commented,

> A lot of parents just send them there and say "fix him." They don't want anything to do with it, "fix him and send him home", and it can't be done that way. Parents

> need to be there because they need to know what's going on. They need to know the warning signs of when emotions are down, and I need to be aware of my emotions. You can't forget and lock them up.

Overall Analysis of Karl's Experience

Karl described growing up in a home environment in which he was not allowed to express himself. He feels that his emotional needs were not being met, and eventually it resulted in being disconnected from his thoughts and feelings. He believes this was a factor in offending and that during the offending he "blocked out" or "bottled up" his thoughts and feelings. Karl also described feeling disconnected from others. He separated himself from friends and feels that he did not have very many people to talk to.

During and after the offending Karl experienced many negative thoughts and feelings. He believes that the offending would occur around stressful moments in his home and that offending served as a temporary release of stress. It, however, made him feel more stressed. He also believed that people did not like him, he was suicidal, and he often questioned why he was offending.

During the offending Karl thought that his sister hoped the offending would stop and that she wanted to help him without having him removed from the home. He believed that she felt helpless and uncertain about what she should do. Karl also wanted to stop offending. He expressed care and concern for his sister, and he felt guilty about harming her. He also came to realize that he was also harming himself and others in his family.

When Karl began counselling he found it very difficult. He described himself as being suspicious of others, nervous, bored, and frustrated. Karl stated that he did not talk much in counselling and he could not express his thoughts or feelings. As he learned about his emotions and wrote them down to discuss with his peers in group counselling he began to feel more comfortable. He also realized that his peers were similar to him and he appreciated their feedback. Karl indicated that he enjoyed counselling and that it became a part of his life.

Karl believed that through counselling he experienced many positive changes in his thoughts and beliefs. He believed that he learned to express himself and that it was important to do so. He also thought it was easier to talk about his thoughts and feelings. Karl described becoming more aware of high-risk situations as well as his emotions and he tries to be open and honest about them. Karl believed that he now has the ability to work harder and move on in life knowing that if he needs help he can return for counselling and feel comfortable doing so. Karl also mentioned learning strategies that he could use in dealing with feelings of stress and anger.

Although Karl gradually enjoyed counselling, he also believed that it required hard work. He indicated that it was easy to talk about what he should do, but it was harder to apply the skills and concepts learned. Karl described looking at life a little differently now. He feels that people determine and control their own future and that being successful entails much effort. He also believes that to be successful in counselling and to not reoffend the involvement and support of parents is necessary.

The Common Shared Experience

In this study seven shared themes were identified amongst the participants. These themes are presented in Appendix G. The seven themes were: (1) Unhealthy Thinking as a Result of Past Negative Experiences, (2) Lack of Concern for Self, (3) Experienced Disconnection from Thoughts and Feelings, (4) Thoughts and Feelings of Guilt and

Responsibility, (5) Realized Offending was Harmful, (6) Initial Reluctance of Counselling, and (7) Experienced Change and Growth from Counselling.

Higher-Level Shared Themes

The seven shared themes that were identified amongst the participants were further clustered into more higher-level shared themes and they are presented in Appendix H. An overall presentation of the third-order and fourth-order themes is also given in Appendix I. There were three higher-level themes identified: (1) Internal and External Turmoil Precipitated Offending, (2) Thoughts of Wanting to Stop Offending, and (3) Progressively Experienced Positive Change and Growth from Counselling. These three themes are presented below and serve as a structure for presenting results of the seven shared themes.

Internal and External Turmoil Precipitated Offending

This higher-level theme was developed on the basis of the participants' experiences of their thoughts and beliefs before and during the offending. It presents forms of thinking that all participants discussed as being critical to their experience. It also reveals past familial factors that participants' believed were responsible for their negative thoughts about themselves and offending. Within this higher-level theme, three shared themes were found to be common to the participants. These were "Unhealthy Thinking a Result of Past Negative Experiences", "Lack of Concern for Self", and "Experienced Disconnection from Thoughts and Feelings".

Unhealthy thinking a result of past negative experiences. This theme involved past negative experiences that participants believed were a factor in the development of unhealthy, or as Dave described, "ill" thinking before and during the offending. Both Olaf and Dave discussed harmful circumstances that occurred in their life such as emotional strain, and physical, verbal, and sexual abuse. Olaf discussed being physically, sexually, and verbally abused as a child by boyfriends of his mother and he believed this has had a tremendous impact on him. He felt that it made him a more sarcastic and cynical person than he would like to be, and that it sometimes made him respond to others in a way he believed was harmful. Olaf described thinking as a child that the sexual abuse he encountered was "just like another close thing" to do. He believed that this thinking persisted and that he used it to justify offending against his sister. Olaf believed that his sister did not understand that it was wrong and therefore she was not objecting to the offending. He believed that he was not physically harming her and that she thought they were just being a "good brother and sister." Olaf also thought that because it happened to him as a child it was "okay" behavior. In addition, he indicated that he did not want to accept that it was wrong, but that it was a normal part of the downward spiral of events happening in his life that he believed he had no control over.

Dave described similar circumstances and experiences in terms of his thoughts and beliefs. He discussed being neglected, and physically, verbally, and sexually abused as a child by various people in his life. Dave never disclosed being offending against until after offending his foster sister. He believed that he carried the abuse, mistreatment, and neglect with him, which led him to choose to offend. Dave also indicated that by not dealing with the abuse his perception of the world, as he described it, was "skewed" and evolved into "a constant state of ill thinking" and a "sickness in his head." Furthermore, Dave indicated that he learned a poor sense of familial boundaries and lacked knowledge of what was right and wrong within familial relationships. He believed this led him to think that this type of behavior was not entirely inappropriate, which contributed to offending against his foster sister.

Lack of concern for self. In this theme, participants described feeling depressed, not liking or caring about themselves, and setting themselves up for failure. Olaf believed that before and during the offending were the lowest points in his life. He believed that he lacked the ability to accomplish anything significant, he blamed himself for difficulties occurring at home, and he described having thoughts of suicide. He indicated loathing himself for offending against his sister, and he believed nothing in his life was going the way he wanted it to. Olaf indicated that there were a "cascade of events" in his life that were going wrong and he thought that trying to fix things was hopeless. Olaf indicated that this was a factor in the offending and he stated, "I intentionally sabotaged things so that they'd go wrong, and just figured my life's already going to hell I might as well let it continue."

Similarly, Dave discussed not being happy with himself before and during the offending. Dave thought that he did not care what happened to himself and therefore, he did not care what happened to other people. He stated, "I felt no compassion." Like Olaf, Dave also indicated that he would set himself up for failure. Dave believes that he has always made decisions that were harmful to himself. At times these decisions were intentional and at other times they were a result of "acting without thinking." Dave described acting without thinking during the offending in order to "not feel bad about doing it as to not do it."

Experienced disconnection from thoughts and feelings. Within this theme participants described a disconnection from their thoughts and feelings before and during the offending. Both Olaf and Karl described "blocking out" or "locking away" their thoughts and feelings as to avoid unhappiness and to hide from themselves and the offending. Karl indicated that during the offending he would try to block out all of his thoughts and feelings. Olaf indicated that he would often tell himself "I'll never do it again." A metaphor he used was that he would take unwanted thoughts and throw them inside a little box in his head, set it on a shelf, and forget about it. Olaf also described thinking that the offending seemed like it was happening "somewhere far away" and therefore he did not need to worry about it. Karl described not wanting to admit the offending to himself and he would therefore "throw a pad lock and chain" over his thoughts and feelings until he was sure that nobody could get in. Karl also described "bottling and compressing" his thoughts to escape the truth about the offending.

Thoughts of Wanting to Stop Offending

Within this higher-level theme, two shared themes were found to be common to all participants. These were "Thoughts and Feelings of Guilt and Responsibility" and "Realized Offending was Harmful." Participants described thoughts of wanting power and control over their environment yet feeling terrible about it at the same time, and feeling guilty and being responsible for the offending. Participants also discussed feeling care and concern for their sibling, coming to realize that offending was harmful, and experiencing thoughts of wanting to stop offending.

Thoughts and feelings of guilt and responsibility. All participants indicated that at some point during the offending they began to feel a sense of guilt and responsibility. Olaf described that at first he experienced thoughts of needing power and control over the many stresses that were occurring in his life. He believed that through offending he gained a temporary sense of power and control, but at the same time he did not feel good about what he was doing. Olaf described feeling tremendous amounts of guilt after offending, and he came to realize that this behavior was his choice and that he was responsible for those choices. He indicated coming to feel empathic towards his sister and a deep sense of regret for the offending. He also indicated thoughts of wanting to change or correct what he had done.

Dave also described feeling guilty and responsible, and he wished that he would have been taught right from wrong at a younger age so that he may not have offended. He indicated that during the offending he began to experience much remorse and he stated that after his thoughts were yelling, "no, no, no!" when he realized, as he described, "how ugly it was." Dave indicated that he wished he could take back each offense.

Like Dave and Olaf, Karl described how terrible he felt about what he was doing. Karl indicated that his thoughts often centered around why he was offending. He discussed feeling much emotional stress, and he believed that offending was like a temporary stress release, however, he only felt more terrible and more stressed after each offense.

Realized offending was harmful. In this shared theme, participants described their thoughts and feelings about their sibling during the offending, becoming more aware of their siblings' feelings and behavior during the offending and from this, coming to realize at some level that offending was harmful. For example Olaf described being protective of his sister. He began to notice her "becoming addicted to this behavior" and feeling some sense of rejection. Olaf also stated, "I never actually intended to hurt her." After the offending was discovered, Olaf felt a sense of relief because now he could get help and not let the offending continue. Dave indicated feeling concerned for his sister's psychological well-being and he wanted to explain to his sister why he offended. He felt that she did not deserve it and hopes that in the future they can have a more healthy, positive relationship. Karl believed that his sister felt helpless and unsure of what she should do. Karl felt that his sister wanted to help him stop offending without having him removed from the home because he cared for his sister. He noticed that at some points his sister would feel sick when he was around because she was afraid of him, and he thought she hoped that the offending would not reoccur. Karl indicated that during the offending he began to feel guilty and realize that he was not only inflicting harm on his sibling, but on himself and his family. He stated, "I knew I didn't want to offend again."

Progressively Experienced Positive Change and Growth from Counselling

All of the participants described experiencing a gradual but positive change in their thoughts and beliefs from the time of the offending as a result of counselling. All of the participants acknowledged that initially they experienced some reluctance about being in counselling. At the onset participants believed they either did not need counselling or they felt apprehensive about it and did not want to be there. They explained that later in counselling they began to notice changes in their perspective of themselves, in their awareness of others, and their perception of the future.

Initial reluctance of counselling. At the onset of counselling all participants described feeling some reluctance about participating in counselling. Both Dave and Karl indicated that at first they felt very nervous about expressing themselves in front of other peers in group counselling. Dave felt intimidated discussing "something so personal with so much shame around it" and Karl described it as being, "painful and frustrating" because he was so nervous and afraid of "messing up." Karl also described not knowing what feelings really were, and he found it difficult to talk about them in counselling. In addition, he felt suspicious of others, and he did not trust anyone. Olaf indicated feeling forced into counselling. He believed that he would not benefit from it and that it was a waste of time. He, therefore, initially remained disconnected from others in counselling. Gradually, Olaf came to notice similarities between himself and his peers in group counselling, and he began to notice positive changes within himself. Karl also noticed similarities. He realized that he was not the only person who offended and that his peers had similar thoughts and feelings as himself. As well, Dave indicated becoming more open-minded about counselling, and trying to understand the feedback his peers were giving him.

Acknowledges experiencing positive change and growth from counselling. All of the participants clearly acknowledged experiencing a positive change in their thoughts and beliefs and growth within themselves as a result of proceeding through counselling. Karl described feeling a sense of relief in learning to express his thoughts and emotions, and he tries to remain aware of them as well as open and honest about them to himself and others. He feels that he has learned tools to control feelings of stress and anger that he once "bottled up" or "locked away." Karl believes that he maintains a continuous awareness of his surroundings and high-risk situations. He feels that applying the skills from counselling is hard work, but he feels motivated and the ability to work harder and progress further in life. Karl described viewing life a little differently now in that life is not fair to everyone, people determine and control their own future, and success involves helping oneself. Furthermore, Karl indicated feeling a sense of relief knowing that at any point if he needs support he can turn to his parents and counselling.

Dave also indicated experiencing "a tremendous change" in the way he thinks about himself and life. He described himself as feeling much healthier, keeping a positive perspective in life, and trying to surround himself with positive things. Dave believes that through counselling he has learned more about himself, and he has gained more self-acceptance. He indicated that being happier with who he is was an important aspect of the change he experienced and he feels that it reduces one's probability of reoffending. Dave also indicated that because he cares about himself, he also feels respect and compassion toward others. Dave stated, "I understand that I have feelings and so does the rest of the world." Like Karl, Dave believes he has become more aware of his surroundings, thoughts and behavior, and communication with others. He too feels more able to express himself and integrate the feedback he received from his peers in group counselling. Additionally, Dave believes that being immediately placed in a group home after offending and beginning counselling soon after gave him the opportunity to reflect on his life and to take a deeper look at who he was. He also believes that learning about maturity outside of a group counselling setting as well as inside of group counselling has made him realize how it affects the way he interacts with others and how they interact with him.

Similarly, Olaf indicated that as counselling progressed he opened his mind to the benefits that social interaction has within a group counselling setting. He feels that he became more open with others, and he realized his need for counselling. Like Karl and Dave he described experiencing a positive change such as an increase in self-awareness, self-esteem, trust in others such as his parents, and confidence in his abilities. Olaf also believes that his perception of the future is more positive and he feels more motivated to move forward in life.

Overall Analysis of the Shared Themes

All of the participants described experiencing various negative thoughts and beliefs before and during the offending. Participants discussed past abusive circumstances, which they believed created an "ill thinking" such as thinking it was "normal" or appropriate behavior because they were offended against or because of a lack of familial boundaries.

Participants believed they lacked concern for their well-being during the offending, therefore, they felt no concern for others. They indicated feeling depressed, suicidal, lacking confidence in themselves and their abilities, and they would often set themselves up for failure, whether it was intentional or simply "acting without thinking."

All participants indicated experiencing a disconnection from their thoughts and feelings before and during the offending. They metaphorically described taking unwanted thoughts and "blocking them out", "locking them away", bottling them up", or "throwing them in a little box, placing them on a shelf, and forgetting about them." They believed that by doing this they were running or hiding from the truth about what they had done.

All participants described experiencing, at some level, thoughts of wanting to stop offending. They indicated feeling a deep sense of remorse, guilt, responsibility, empathy, or responsibility for what they had done. Participants described having thoughts of wanting to take back, change, or correct the offending or they questioned why they were doing this and they felt more terrible and stressed after each offense.

At some point, all participants also came to realize the harmfulness of offending by becoming aware of and noticing their sibling's behavior and emotions. For example, some participants noticed their sibling "becoming addicted to the behavior" or feeling sick. They believed their sibling was feeling rejected, helpless, or hoping that it would not continue. All participants indicated care and concern for their sibling and thoughts of wanting to stop harming their sister.

All participants indicated that after the offending they hesitantly began group counselling. During the onset of counselling they felt reluctant to participate. Participants believed that they did not belong in counselling, they would not benefit from it, and they distanced themselves from others. They also felt nervous and apprehensive about expressing themselves in a group setting. Participants described that as counselling progressed, however, they noticed similarities between themselves and their peers, and they became more open-minded and aware of positive changes in themselves.

An important aspect of each participant's experience was the progressive, positive change and growth that occurred as a result of counselling. Through counselling all participants indicated a change in the way they thought about themselves and other people. Participants indicated learning more about themselves and accepting who they are. They felt an increase in their happiness, motivation, and confidence in their abilities. They experienced a sense of relief learning to express themselves and knowing that they can return to counselling for additional help and support if needed. Furthermore, participants indicated becoming more aware of their actions, thoughts, and feelings as well as their interactions with others. They also described feeling more positive about the future.

Chapter Five

Discussion

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to illuminate the unique experiences of adolescents who sexually offend against a sibling in terms of their thoughts and beliefs present before, during, and after the sexual abuse, and the adolescent sibling sexual offender's awareness and understanding of their thoughts and beliefs changing as a result of counselling. The literature in this area has focused on defining and categorizing adolescent sibling sexual abuse, identifying common characteristics of adolescent sexual offenders, suggesting prevalence rates, and describing dysfunctional familial patterns common to adolescent sibling sexual offenders. Treatment interventions used with adolescent sexual offenders and the effectiveness of treatment interventions have also been studied. Additional research is needed to strengthen the literature on the experiences of adolescent sibling sexual offenders.

Three participants who were in treatment or just recently completed treatment for having sexual contact with a biological, step-, or adoptive female sibling were interviewed. Through transcriptions and intense data analysis seven shared themes were identified which were ordered into three higher-level themes that capture the essence of their experience. These higher-level themes were: (1) Internal and External Turmoil Precipitated Offending, (2) Thoughts of Wanting to Stop Offending, and (3) Progressively Experienced Positive Change and Growth from Counselling.

In this chapter, the results of the study are highlighted in reference to the existing literature about adolescent sibling sexual offenders. The study's limitations are discussed as well as implications for future research.

Results of the Study and Reference to the Existing Literature

An important result of this study was the participants' experience of negative thoughts and beliefs about themselves and the offending. It seemed many of these thoughts and beliefs were a development of past abusive experiences. All participants described experiencing harmful circumstances in the past such as physical, verbal, or sexual abuse, or significant emotional strain such as not being allowed to express emotions at home, which they indicated as factors in the development of negative thoughts and offending. Loredo (1982) suggests that adolescent sibling sexual abuse may be a result of dysfunction within the family system, an attempt to cope with unmet emotional needs, or a release of anxiety due to severely stressful circumstances. Pierce and Pierce (1990) also suggest that it may be a result of his or her own abuse by a family member or an acting out of extreme familial difficulties. In O'Brien's study (1991), an increased rate of physical abuse was noted among families of adolescent sibling sexual offenders. Likewise, in Laviola's (1992) study forms of verbal and physical abuse were common in families of adolescent sibling sexual offenders. As such, it would appear beneficial within the counselling process to address any past abusive experiences of adolescent sibling sexual offenders to identify how this impacts the offender's current lifestyle and thought processes (Kahn & Lafond, 1988). This would involve a careful balance between offering support and confronting the client's negative thoughts and beliefs. It also involves addressing any distortions that may have occurred to the client's perceptions of sex and relationships as well as developing a baseline for his or her thoughts, feelings, and behaviors (Burgess, Kaplan, McCormack, & Grant, 1988).

Participants in this study described thinking that the behavior was "okay" or "not entirely inappropriate" because they were not physically harming their sibling and because they had experienced sexual abuse in the past. The literature indicates that minimization of the offending can include harm done to the victim(s), the extent of previous offensive behavior, or the extent of the offender's responsibility for offending (Barbaree & Cortoni, 1993). Participants also believed that the offending was thought of as "normal" interaction between family members. Sgroi (1982) indicates that adolescent sibling sexual abuse is fostered in home environments that fail to set appropriate role boundaires. The results of this study suggest that an integral component of counselling is the realignment of more appropriate physical and emotional familial boundaries and responsibilities.

Participants also described that before and during the offending they had thoughts of suicide and of not caring about themselves and therefore not caring about others. In a study by Groth and Loredo (1981), adolescent sibling sex offenders were identified as having low self-esteem, deep seated feelings of inadequacy and emptiness, and an inability to cope with everyday demands. Participants also described that before and during the offending they would often "set themselves up for failure" intentionally or unintentionally, or make decisions that were harmful to themselves. This is similar to what Pierce and Pierce (1990) described of adolescent sibling sexual offenders. They reported behavioral problems such as running away, aggression, lying, or stealing. In addition, participants described a disconnection from their thoughts and feelings. This is similar to what is indicated in the literature as Ryan (1991) explains that a common dynamic seen in home environments is either emotional impoverishment and absence of affective cues or a display of inappropriate affect.

Participants described experiencing, at some level, thoughts of wanting to stop offending. At some point during the offending they began to experience a sense of guilt, remorse, empathy, and responsibility for their behavior. Some participants questioned why they were doing this and came to realize the harmfulness of the offending. This relates to an important aspect of counselling, which focuses on increasing the adolescent sibling sexual offender's acceptance, responsibility, and empathy toward the victim(s) (Ryan et. al, 1987).

An encouraging theme in the results of this study was the participants' progressive experience of positive change and growth as a result of counselling. Participants unanimously indicated an initial reluctance to participate in counselling. They described thinking that they did not belong in counselling and that they did not need counselling, or that they would not benefit from it. Barbaree and Cortoni (1993) indicated that forms of denial or minimization of the offending could create an environment in which the adolescent offender does not want to be in counselling. Participants also described feeling nervous or afraid that they would "mess up" as well as feeling intimidated discussing "something so personal with so much shame around it." Participants indicated that as they learned to explore their thoughts, feelings, and behavior with same age-peers they began to notice similarities in their experiences and a change in their perspective of themselves and of counselling. Lombardo and DiGiorgio-Miller (1988) suggest that focusing on feelings before, during, and after the offense(s) is beneficial in group counselling, and

Print and O'Callaghan (1999) indicate that confrontation and challenges from same-age peers are powerful influences in creating change. Similarly, Nicholaichik (1991) reports that counselling in a group treatment setting offers support from peers that is an important therapeutic factor, which instills confidence and encourages disclosure.

As a result of counselling, participants indicated a positive change in the way they thought about themselves and other people. Participants indicated learning more about themselves and coming to a greater self-acceptance. They felt an increase in their happiness and motivation to work harder and progress further in life as well as increased confidence in their abilities. Participants described experiencing a sense of relief after sharing their thoughts and emotions and knowing that they can return to counselling for additional help and support if needed in the future. Also, participants indicated becoming more aware of their actions, thoughts, and feelings as well as their interactions with others, and learning skills to deal more appropriately with feelings such as anger and stress.

These changes relate to a variety of interventions in the process of counselling suggested in the literature such as helping them become more aware of high-risk situations (Carey & McGrath, 1989; Jenkins-Hall & Marlatt, 1989; MacDonald & Pithers, 1989), teaching them to recognize their offense cycle and learn ways to interrupt the progression toward reoffending (Lane, 1991), and helping them develop a positive perspective of themselves and confidence in their abilities (Nicholaichik, 1991). The changes that the participants in this study experienced are similar to an outcome study by Kimball and Guarino-Ghezzi (1996). In their study adolescent sex offenders demonstrated more positive attitudes, greater skill acquisition, expressed more remorse, accepted more responsibility for their sexual offense(s), and articulated relapse prevention strategies at a six-month follow-up after treatment.

Limitations of the Study

Various limitations of this study deserve mention. First, participants for this study were voluntary and purposefully selected from an adolescent sibling sexual offender treatment program. Therefore they may not necessarily be representative of the adolescent sibling sexual offender population.

Second, information from this study is based on retrospective self-reports from adolescent sibling sexual offenders. Participants were asked to describe their experiences in terms of their thoughts and beliefs around the time of the offense(s). The period of time that had passed since the offense ranged from one to three years; this invites the possibility of inaccurate recall.

Third, participants were at the later stages of treatment when they were interviewed for this study. At the onset of each interview participants were asked not to describe what they thought the researcher wanted to hear or what they believed a correct answer would be but to let their responses flow from their thoughts, feelings, and beliefs. At some degree, however, the effects of treatment may have filtered through in their responses.

Implications for Future Research

The information from this study is beneficial in that it provides data, rooted in adolescent sibling sexual offenders' thoughts and beliefs that can serve as the basis for future research. For a variety of reasons female sibling sexual abuse goes unnoticed in society, and a more accurate estimate of the prevalence is needed in the literature. A replication of this study using a phenomenological research approach with adolescent female sibling sexual offenders would serve as an enlightening comparison.

It is important in counselling to provide treatment from a culturally-sensitive perspective. More information is required about adolescent sibling sexual abuse within other cultures in order to provide counselling in this area that best reflects the client's needs. For example, since the participants in this study were all white adolescent males, it would be interesting to investigate this phenomenon in an immigrant population.

All participants in this study indicated an initial reluctance to enter counselling, however, as time passed they began to notice changes in their perspective of themselves and in the counselling process. Future research could attempt to take an in-depth look at the specific factors responsible for change in their perspective of counselling.

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Appendix A

Adolescent Research Project

This is a letter of information inviting you to participate in the following research project. The purpose of this project is to develop a better understanding of the thoughts, perceptions, beliefs, and attitudes of adolescents in treatment who have committed an offense of a sexual nature toward a biological, step-, or adoptive sibling. The researcher, Michelle Vandegriend, is a Masters level student in the Faculty of Education, Educational Psychology (counselling) at the University of Alberta.

Participants must be open to describing their experiences and thoughts with regard to their offense(s) and treatment, willing to be involved in this study, able to communicate in an in-depth manner the phenomenon under question, and have acknowledged their offense(s) to some degree. All participants must meet the following inclusionary criteria: (a) committed an offense of a sexual nature toward a biological, step-, or adoptive sibling of the opposite sex (b) between 14 and 17 years of age; (c) the identified victim was female between the age of 2 and 10 at the time of the disclosure of the abuse; and (d) both the participants and the participants' parent(s)/guardian(s) must be in agreement to participate in this study.

Two audiotaped semi-structured interviews will be conducted. Participants' identity will not be revealed because a made-up name will be used throughout the study. The first interview will involve discussing the research project with each participant, answering questions participants may have about the study, and asking interview questions. The second interview will involve asking any remaining interview questions. Pop and snacks will be provided throughout the interviews. I will transcribe each audiotaped interview into a written format and analyze the data for common themes. All audiotapes, discs, and hard copies will be kept in a secure place, and they will be erased and destroyed after the study is completed. Participants will have the opportunity to ask questions about the research project and the process throughout the study.

Due to the possible emotion-laden content care will be taken to debrief and diffuse potentially unmanageable material. This will involve offering support and validating feelings and experiences during the interviews, and possibly a follow-up by the participants' group therapist. Participants are free to withdraw from the study at any time until data analysis has begun; there is no penalty for withdrawing. During the study, if the participant is finding the interviews difficult or if I notice any non-verbal indications of discomfort I will remind the participant of the option to opt out. If participants choose to decline from the study this will in no way affect their involvement in group/individual therapy or subsequent assessments that may be requested in the future.

Participants may benefit from this study by having the opportunity to explore their own thoughts, feelings, beliefs, perceptions, and attitudes with regard to their offense(s) and treatment, by coming to a greater understanding about them, and by having the opportunity to provide information that may assist in future research and treatment of adolescents who have committed an offense(s) of a sexual nature.

Appendix B

Dear Parent/Guardian:

This is a consent form inviting your child to participate in a research project. The purpose of this study is to develop a better understanding of the thoughts, perceptions, beliefs, and attitudes of adolescents in treatment who have committed an offense of a sexual nature toward a biological, step-, or adoptive sibling. The researcher, Michelle Vandegriend, is a Masters level student in the Faculty of Education, Educational Psychology (counselling) at the University of Alberta.

The researcher will arrange 2 interviews with your child that will be audiotaped. Each interview will take approximately an hour and a half, and juice and snacks will be provided by the researcher. Participants will have the opportunity to describe their experiences and thoughts with regard to their offense(s).

Participants will select a made-up name to ensure their anonymity is protected. The researcher will transcribe all interviews, and the data will then be analyzed for common themes. The audiotapes will be erased after the study is completed. All audiotapes and record of information will be kept in a secure place in which only the researcher will have access to.

During the study, if the participant is finding the interview difficult or if the researcher notices any non-verbal indications of discomfort the researcher will remind the participant of the option to opt out of the study before data analysis begins and that there is no penalty for opting out. If participants choose to decline from the study this will in no way affect their involvement in group/individual therapy or subsequent assessments that may be requested in the future.

Questions you may have regarding the study will be answered as clearly and fully as possible. Sensitive and emotion laden content may be discussed, therefore, possible resources that participants can contact for counselling will be provided. Participants may benefit by having the opportunity to explore their experiences and thoughts with regard to their offense(s) and treatment, by coming to a greater understanding about them, by having the opportunity to provide information that may assist in future research prevention, and in helping practitioners provide better treatment.

I ______________________________ have read, understand, and willingly agree to

participate in the above research project.

Signed: ______________________________ Dated: ______________________
(parent(s)/guardian(s))

Signed: ______________________________ Dated: ______________________
(participant)

Signed: ______________________________ Dated: ______________________
(witness)

Appendix C

Interview Questions

1. Tell me about yourself.
2. Tell me about your relationship with your sibling(s).
3. Did you notice any important changes in your relationship with them? Please describe.
4. What was that like for you?
5. What was going on in your life during that period of time?
6. Do you remember any events in your life that had a big impact on you? Please describe.
7. Were you aware of thinking differently at that time of the offense? Please describe.
8. What were your thoughts before, during, and after the offense(s)?
9. What did you imagine X was thinking before, during, and after the offense(s)?
10. Are you aware of having changed in any way since then? Please describe.
11. What do you believe were the influences of this change?
12. What do you think you have learned outside of counselling?
13. Describe what therapy was like for you at the beginning versus now.
14. When you reflect back to the time of your offending and you look at where you are now, what thoughts come to mind?
15. How do you think others saw you before the offense versus after?
16. Where do you see yourself one year/ten year(s) from now?

Appendix D

Thematic Abstraction of Olaf's Experience

	Two Levels of Abstraction	
Excerpts from Protocols	Paraphrases	First Order Themes
O1. I had a lot of stresses...I lost control of myself and I'm entirely responsible for my actions, but I'm not who I was then anymore.	Felt stressed and loss of control, and now feels responsible and changed.	O1.1 Feels responsible O1.2 Feels changed O1.3 Lost control O1.4 Experienced much stress
O2. I was very protective of her and I loved watching her play or enjoy herself and I felt like a million dollars every time she run up and give me a hug and yell my name in happiness and all that.	Felt protective of my sister and seeing her happy made me feel like a million dollars.	O2.1 Felt protective over sister. O2.2 Felt love toward sister.
O3. Even during the time I was offending against her I never actually at the time intended to hurt her and I still care a great deal for her, I still do now to certain extent.	Never intended to offend/hurt my sister and I care for her a great deal.	O3.1 Never intended to inflict harm. O3.2 Cares for sister.
O4. I began to distance myself from her a little bit, but in general our relationship pretty much stayed the same at least from my point of view.	Distanced myself from her, and felt the relationship stayed the same.	O4.1 Created emotional distance from sister.
O5. I'd notice that every time I'd be around her I'd feel apprehensive and a little bit, well a lot guilty, and because of that I'd distance myself from her as much as possible as to not feel those feelings -trying to hide myself from them...	Felt apprehensive and guilty and distanced myself so that I would no feel that way.	O5.1 Distanced self to hide from feelings of guilt. O5.2 Felt apprehensive. O5.3 Felt guilty.
O6. ...the amount of intense feelings we had for each other like love and just enjoying being around each other kind of lessened.	Enjoyment of being together and love lessened.	O6.1 Diminished sense of love.

O7. I wouldn't be happy with myself and that would kind of transfer onto her.	Unhappiness with myself would transfer onto her.	O7.1 Transferred unhappiness onto sister.
O8. I wasn't accepting it myself. I wasn't facing the fact that what I was doing was wrong or even that I was doing it.	Was not facing the offense/wrong doing, or aware of what I was doing.	O8.1 Unaware of the offending.
O9. … it seemed absolutely normal…	Situation seemed normal.	O9.1 Normalized the offending.
O10. …but other than that one thing in my life I normally have a really good moral compass.	Normally I have a good moral compass.	O10.1 Perception of self as moral.
O11. Unconsciously, in the back of my mind I'd began to loath myself and hate myself…sabotage myself…my mind wanted to cope with it but had to deal with it kind of in the shadows.	Struggled in dealing with offending and began to loath and sabotage myself.	O11.1 Feelings of self-loathing while struggling to avoid confronting offending.
O12. I never felt good about it but up until the part where I actually began therapy I didn't pay any attention to it.	Did not feel good about what I was doing, and did not pay attention to it until therapy.	O12.1 Distracted self from negative feelings at time of offending.
O13. …I'd never be honest with it. I would blame everything else around me but I'd never actually blame myself for it happening.	Would blame everything else for what was happening.	O13.1 Avoidance of responsibility for offending.
O14. I'm beginning to realize that the things all around me made it more and more acceptable to me at the time.	Realizing that the things around me made it feel acceptable.	O14.1 Believes that external factors made it feel normal.
O15. As I deal with things now, I'm willing to face myself with complete honesty.	Willing to face self with honesty.	O15.1 Presently desires to be honest with self.
O16. Also, at that point in time I was trying to kind of get my life back in order and trying to help others who were important to me…that particular aspect of my life	Felt that trying to get my life in order and help others who were important to me was not a bad aspect of my life.	O16.1 Positive feelings about helping self and others.

	during that point in time was a not entirely a bad thing.		
O17.	…nothing in my life as far as I can see was going right.	Felt nothing in life was going right.	O17.1 Feelings of failure.
O18.	My mother's relationship with her common-law was getting worse and worse and often it would seem to me that it was my fault.	Felt blame for my mother's relationship worsening.	O17.1 Perception of self as problematic.
O19.	I was suffering from low self-esteem. I was constantly depressed. I was having thoughts of suicide - never actually going never committing it but the thoughts were there, feelings of worthlessness, feelings of …the complete lack of ability to do anything that was important…	Felt depressed and had thoughts of suicide.	O19.1 Felt depressed O19.2 Felt suicidal. O19.3 Felt worthless O19.4 Felt unable to act.
O20.	I think at that point I hit almost rock bottom…	Almost hit rock bottom.	O20.1 Felt hopeless.
O21.	When I was originally caught within my offense pattern umm…my life seemed to hit an all-time low.	Life seemed to hit an all-time low when I was caught offending.	O21.1 Felt at lowest point in life.
O22.	…relationship (with friend) became deeper and more meaningful… And that particular thing boosted my esteem…	Relationship with a new friend boosted my self-esteem.	O22.1 Finding friendship increased self-esteem.
O23.	My future seems more joyous and prosperous, and because of that I was more willing to go on.	Perception of a joyous and prosperous future and a willingness to move forward.	O23.1 Perception of a positive future creates motivation to move forward.
O24.	I thought at that point it would be the worse thing that had ever happened to me…but while I was at jail…I completed a number of things I wouldn't be able to.	Thought jail was going to be the worse thing that ever happened, but I completed things I would not have done otherwise.	O24.1 After the offending, developed sense of accomplishment in jail.

O25. …when I left jail…I began to believe in myself even more knowing that I can achieve things on my own, and that I've also done a lot for myself when I was in jail.	Believed in myself and that I can accomplish things on my own because I did so in jail.	O25.1 After the offending, developed belief in own abilities.
O26. (being sexually abused) was part of a contributing factor to what I did to my sister, and because of that it makes me realize that it's a rather important event in my life as well, and one that I try to get help for as much as possible.	Believe being sexually abused was a factor in my offending and I try to get as much help as possible.	O26.1 Belief that own sexual abuse was a factor in offending. O26.2 Belief that own sexual abuse is important factor in life. O26.3 Tries to get help for own abuse.
O27. I was never actually consciously aware of it. During that entire time I feel as though I was in a dead space. Kind of like when you wake up in the morning and your not thinking properly, your not doing anything your suppose to.	Felt I was not consciously aware of offending.	O27.1 Disconnection with awareness of offending.
O28. It was just a really extended fog that I know I was thinking differently and wasn't doing what was proper but it didn't actually dawn on me at that point in time until after everything was said and done.	Felt like I was in a fog, and was thinking differently, but was not aware of it until after the offending.	O28.1 Unclear thinking around time of offense.
O29. I didn't know I was thinking differently, especially since the change in my thinking was gradual not all at once and because of that it didn't actually seem like it was changing at all.	Change in thinking was a gradual process.	O29.1 Thinking gradually changed.
O30. I felt like I was walking through a bad dream that you just can't get out of, but never being aware of exactly what the dream is…	Felt like a bad dream.	O30.1 Felt trapped in a bad dream.
O31. …when I look back on it now I look back at myself and I say how can I do any of that? How	Questions how offending could have happened.	O31.1 Presently questions how offending

	did I not notice that it was going on?		happened.
O32.	I had this overall feeling that something was wrong but I couldn't tell what, and what specifically what was going really badly.	A feeling that something was wrong, but could not identify it.	O32.1 General sense that something was wrong during offending.
O33.	I think the thoughts that were most foremost on my mind were the sense that no matter what I did things wouldn't go the way I wanted them to.	Thought that things would not go the way I wanted them too.	O33.1 Felt powerless.
O34.	I think that just before each event, when I was being most honest with myself and things weren't in a haze. I knew everything that was going on, everything that was going wrong and everything that was going right, and I decided that the things going wrong outweighed the things going right.	Right before each offense was when I was most aware of everything, and I decided there were more things going wrong then things going right.	O34.1 Felt most honest with self right before offending. O34.2 Felt aware of everything going right and wrong in life before offending. O34.3 Decided to continue pattern of things going wrong.
O35.	I intentionally sabotaged things so that they'd go wrong, and just figuring that my life's already going to hell I might as well let it continue. I think that was what was really foremost on my mind before.	Intentionally sabotaged things for myself and decided to let the things going wrong in my life continue.	O35.1 Intentionally set self up for failure.
O36.	I think I was continually thinking that this is wrong, but I don't have any strengths so I can't stop myself.	Continuously thought it was wrong but felt I had no strengths to stop.	O36.1 Perception of no self control during offending.
O37.	I figured that oh well she's not objecting so it's okay,	Thought it was okay because she (sibling) was not objecting.	O37.1 Belief that sibling did not object therefore it was acceptable.

O38. …and it happened to me so it's okay.	It happened to me so it was okay to do.	O38.1 Justified offending by using own experience of being offended against.
O39. I felt happy to have power over something whether or not I was causing difficulty to another person, even if it was my little sister.	Having power felt good even if it was causing harm.	O39.1 Felt happy to have power even if it caused difficulty to another.
O40. I just wasn't feeling any moral obligations one way or another about anything.	Did not feel any moral obligations.	O40.1 Felt lack of moral obligation.
O41. I don't think I ever felt entirely too good about what I was doing, but I felt good about the fact that there's something in my life that I can control.	Did not feel good about what I was doing, but the perception of control felt good.	O41.1 Felt bad about offending. O41.2 Felt good about having control over something.
O42. Umm…the power that I felt was the ability to have somebody else fall to my control. I had the ability to choose what was going on and when it was going on, and everything that went on no matter what I chose seemed like a good thing, an enjoyable feeling, which means I have power over what I enjoyed, and power to achieve what I enjoyed.	Felt powerful having control over someone.	O42.1 Felt powerful having control during offending.
O43. I felt like I gained more power over myself, over my emotions and feelings, and that just seemed good and so I would continue to try and get this power that made me feel like I had control over things.	Sought more power to feel a sense of control over my life.	O43.1 Sought more power during offending to gain sense of control in life.
O44. I realize now that I never had a lot of power over my life in things going on around me.	Realize that I never had a lot of power over things around me.	O44.1 Presently realizes a lack of power during period of offending.

O45.	…at that point in time I wanted that power because I felt like everything that was going on around me - if I had the power I could change it all.	Wanted the power to change everything around me at that point in time.	O45.1	Wanted power to change environment.
O46.	I realize now that that power, I'll never have. I can only alter the things that I am doing, and because of that my life is more complete and more manageable.	Realize I can only change my actions and I feel life is more complete and manageable because of this.	O46.1	Realizes control over own actions makes life feel manageable.
O47.	…surreal, that's a really good way to put it. It seemed like it was happening but somewhere really far away, and because of that it wasn't my domain of anything. I didn't need to worry about it because it wasn't right there in front of me.	The offending seemed surreal and therefore I did not worry about it.	O47.1	Perception of offending as surreal.
O48.	Lock them away (thoughts), shove them, just get rid of them for the rest of the day and week and month, and year…because if they are put on a shelf then they don't matter.	Would try to get rid of thoughts after offending by locking them away.	O48.1	Avoided thoughts by locking them away.
O49.	… it would be harder and harder to put that lid down and my natural morals and wants for what's right and wrong would come out and I was looking for more and more ways to set myself up.	It would get harder to push the thoughts aside after offending and I would look for ways to set myself up.	O49.1	Harder to suppress thoughts during time of offending.
O50.	…it started to reach the point where I started to realize something was wrong, and because I realized that something was wrong I wanted to find out what, and so I began more and more to think, okay I'm going to tell somebody, I'm going to get help for this…	I began to realize something was wrong and wanted to get help.	O50.1	Desire to tell someone.
O51.	I think she'd go up stairs looking for comfort and a feeling of closeness and as things progressed I think things began	Felt she was looking for comfort and closeness, but it also became addicting for her too.	O51.1	Perception of sister becoming addicted to it and looking

	to get a little addicting for her too…		for closeness.
O52.	I think that she felt that, okay well he's close to me, he's not actually physically hurting me so there's nothing wrong…	I think she felt okay with it because I'm not physically hurting her.	O52.1 Thought sister accepted it because no physical harm done.
O53.	I don't think that she felt any guilt or anything about it because she didn't realize that there was anything to feel guilty about.	She didn't feel guilty about it because she didn't understand.	O53.1 Believed sister had no understanding therefore felt no guilt.
O54.	Umm..afterwards I think it would be similar except I think that she'd feel a little bit rejected …I think that she'd feel a little bit rejected and left out because this feeling of closeness has stopped, and it could be a while before it happens again.	After the offending I think she'd feel rejected because the closeness had stopped.	O54.1 Thought sister felt rejection after the offending.
O55.	At that point I was still so self focused, so in on my own that I didn't care what she felt up until nearing the end when I started to feel more and more empathetic towards it…	Self-focused at first but began to feel empathy.	O55.1 Initially self-focused during offending. O55.2 Later felt more empathetic.
O56.	I felt a sense of apprehension because this (getting caught) can go really badly and can sort of mess up my life entirely, but I also felt a sense of relief knowing because I'm no longer hiding.	Felt apprehensive when the offending was found out and also a sense of relief.	O56.1 Felt apprehensive and sense of relief upon discovery.
O57.	Michelle- Are you aware of having changed since then? Very much so….I've found that my connection with myself, my ability to see my own benefits and mistakes in life have increased greatly.	Much change and increased connection with self and ability to see benefits and mistakes.	O57.1 Much change and increased self-awareness.

O58.	During and before my offense umm…I found that I had no motivation, like I just wasn't interested in going into the future because it didn't hold anything for me to enjoy, or at least it seemed to.	Before and during my offense I had no motivation and no interest in the future.	O58.1 Before and during offending no motivation or future interest.
O59.	After the offense was found out and I started to enter therapy I found that my life started to rearrange itself and get better.	Life started to get better upon entering therapy.	O59.1 Noticed improvements upon entering therapy.
O60.	I began to have faith in my own ability at school work, at working, and just general life, my abilities to get things done, and it took a long while to evolve into the senses that I have now about it, but the second therapy all started, my life started to change around very much to the better.	I began to have faith in myself.	O60.1 Therapy helped to increase faith in abilities.
O61.	External influences come from all sorts of places. One of them would be therapy and the other would be my peer group. Both of them have come into my life since then and have improved every aspect of my life and they both have different long-term effects on me.	Therapy and peers have improved life in different ways.	O61.1 Therapy and peer group influenced positive change.
O62.	I've also got much more faith in my parents, well not faith, more trust in them, in what they say about me and what they believe about me…They are a major resource.	Developed more trust in parents and believe they are a major resource.	O62.1 Increased trust in parents influenced change.
O63.	And internal influences, the fact that I'm more open about my self, to my self, allows me to help myself much better than I could before, and that's major internal influence.	Being open about myself helps me.	O63.1Being more open influences positive change.

O64. ...originally when I entered therapy I didn't want to go to group therapy because I thought it would be completely useless to me.	Initially thought therapy would be useless.	O64.1 Initial perception of therapy as useless.
O65. I didn't think a peer group of that particular thing was going to be any beneficial towards me what so ever, and so I tried to originally stay in individual.	I didn't think that type of peer group would help me so I tried to separate myself from them.	O65.1 Disconnection from group at the onset of counselling.
O66. I felt like I was forced at the time.	I felt I was forced at the time.	O66.1 Initially felt forced attending group counselling.
O67. Seeing people in similar circumstances and having them cueing me and pointing out rationalizations and thinking errors and all that...managed to help greatly...	Having peers in similar circumstances point out thinking errors was helpful.	O67.1 Group counselling helped develop changes in thinking.
O68. ...being in therapy and being a more productive member of therapy improves my own self image because I can see that I'm working towards my own goals, towards getting healthy.	Being productive in therapy improves my self-image because I can see improvements toward goals and getting healthy.	O68.1 Active participation in therapy improved confidence.
O69. I didn't think I belonged in therapy what so ever. I thought they had the wrong person...	I thought I didn't belong in therapy.	O69.1 Felt therapy was not needed.
O70. I was still partially rationalizing and I was still minimizing and all that...	Rationalized and minimized thoughts.	O70.1 Tried to justify minimize seriousness of offending at onset of therapy.
O71. I thought all these people were nothing like me because well I was special...I didn't do nearly as bad as all these guys did...	I thought I was different because I didn't do as bad of an offense as they did.	O71.1 Perceived offense as minor in comparison to peers in counselling.
O72. Now I realize that I do belong in this group because the group's goal is to get better, to get	Realize the group's goal is to get better and that's what I need.	O72.1 Acknowledges need for group counselling.

healthy, and that's what I need.		
O73. I'm very similar to most of the guys in group…	Similar to others in group.	O73.1 Awareness of similarities with group members.
O74. …the things I think I have learned on my own… I can decide what I want in my own life without anybody else at all telling what I need in my life…and…I'm willing to work toward my own goals much more.	I can make decisions for myself and I am willing to work toward my goals.	O74.1 Learned to make decisions for self.
O75. I've also learned that having a peer group, having friends and that sort of thing is very beneficial…	Having peers is beneficial.	O75.1 Learned benefits of social interaction.
O76. …as I go deeper into my thoughts …they always seem to be a sense of regret, a sense of sadness, a sense of worry because I worry that in the future I might do it again, not that I don't have faith in myself just it happened once and history has a tendency to repeat itself.	Sense of regret, sadness and worry about reoffending.	O76.1 Feelings of regret. O76.2 Feelings of anxiety about reoffending.
O77. Most of all thoughts that come back are thoughts of what I can do to change or correct any of that…	Thoughts of wanting to change or correct it are most prominent.	O77.1 Thoughts of wanting to change or correct past offending.

Second Level of Abstraction of Olaf's Experience

First Order Theme(s) Clusters	Second Order Theme(s)
(1.) O39.1 Felt happy to have power even if it caused difficulty to another. O41.2 Felt good about having control over something. O42.1 Felt powerful having control during offending. O43.1 Sought more power during offending to gain sense of control in life. O44.1 Presently realizes a lack of power during period of offending. O45.1 Wanted power to change environment. O46.1 Realizes control over own actions makes life feel manageable. O55.1 Initially self-focused during offending. O1.3 Lost control O1.4 Experienced much stress O36.1 Perception of no self control during offending. O33.1 Felt powerless.	**(O1.) Desire for Power and Control**
(2.) O2.1 Felt protective over sister. O2.2 Felt love toward sister. O3.1 Never intended to inflict harm. O3.2 Cares for sister. O51.1 Perception of sister becoming addicted to	**(O2.) Care and Concern for Sibling**

it and looking for closeness. O53.1 Believed sister had no understanding therefore felt no guilt. O54.1 Thought sister felt rejection after the offending.	
(3.) O56.1 Felt apprehensive and sense of relief upon discovery. O5.2 Felt apprehensive. O10.1 Perception of self as moral. O31.1 Presently questions how offending happened. O50.1 Desire to tell someone. O76.2 Feelings of anxiety about reoffending.	**(O3.) Apprehension and Relief upon Discovery of Offending**
(4.) O4.1 Created emotional distance from sister. O5.1 Distanced self to hide from feelings of guilt. O6.1 Diminished sense of love. O7.1 Transferred unhappiness onto sister. O48.1 Avoided thoughts by locking them away. O12.1 Distracted self from negative feelings at time of offending. O28.1 Unclear thinking around time of offense. O32.1 General sense that something was wrong during offending. O27.1 Disconnection with awareness of	**(O4.) Disconnection from Thoughts and Emotions**

offending. O49.1 Harder to suppress thoughts during time of offending. O8.1 Unaware of the offending. O30.1 Felt trapped in a bad dream. O47.1 Perception of offending as surreal.	
(5.)	**(O5.) Normalized and Minimized Offending**
O9.1 Normalized the offending. O37.1 Belief that sibling did not object therefore it was acceptable. O13.1 Avoidance of responsibility for offending. O14.1 Believes that external factors made it feel normal. O52.1 Thought sister accepted it because no physical harm done. O70.1 Tried to justify and minimize seriousness of offending at onset of therapy. O71.1 Perceived offense as minor in comparison to counselling peers.	
(6.)	**(O6.) Felt Depressed**
O17.1 Feelings of failure. O17.2 Perception of self as problematic. O19.1 Felt depressed O19.2 Felt suicidal. O19.3 Felt worthless O19.4 Felt unable to act. O20.1 Felt hopeless. O21.1 Felt at lowest point in life. O11.1 Feelings of self-loathing while struggling to avoid	

confronting offending. O58.1 Before and during offending no motivation or future interest.	
(7.) O26.1 Belief that own sexual abuse was a factor in offending. O26.2 Belief that own sexual abuse is important factor in life. O26.3 Tries to get help for own abuse. O38.1 Justified offending by using own experience of being offended against.	**(O7.) Belief that Own Sexual Abuse was a Factor in Offending**
(8.) O34.2 Felt aware of everything going right and wrong in life before offending. O34.3 Decided to continue pattern of things going wrong. O40.1 Felt lack of moral obligation. O35.1 Intentionally set self up for failure. O34.1 Felt most honest with self right before offending. O15.1 Presently desires to be honest with self.	**(O8.) Set Self up for Failure**
(9.) O76.1 Feelings of regret. O1.1 Feels responsible O5.3 Felt guilty. O41.1 Felt bad about offending. O55.2 Later felt more empathetic.	**(O9.) Feelings of Guilt and Responsibility**

(10.) O69.1 Felt therapy was not needed. O64.1 Initial perception of therapy as useless. O66.1 Initially felt forced attending group counselling. O65.1 Disconnection from group at the onset of counselling.	**(O10.) Initially Felt Counselling was not Needed**
(11.) O1.2 Feels changed O29.1 Thinking gradually changed. O57.1 Much change and increased self-awareness. O23.1 Perception of a positive future creates motivation to move forward. O59.1 Noticed improvements upon entering therapy. O61.1 Therapy and peer group influenced positive change. O63.1Being more open influences positive change. O67.1 Group counselling helped develop changes in thinking. O72.1 Acknowledges need for group counselling. O73.1 Awareness of similarities with group members. O77.1 Thoughts of wanting to change or correct past offending. O68.1 Active participation in therapy improved confidence.	**(O11.) Experienced Positive Change from Counselling**

O60.1 Therapy helped to increase faith in abilities. O74.1 Learned to make decisions for self. O75.1 Learned benefits of social interaction. O62.1 Increased trust in parents influenced change. O22.1 Finding friendship increased self-esteem. O24.1 After the offending, developed sense of accomplishment in jail. O16.1 Positive feelings about helping self and others. O25.1 After the offending, developed belief in own abilities.	

Appendix E

Thematic Abstraction of Dave's Experience

	Two Levels of Abstraction	
Excerpts from Protocols	Paraphrase	First Level Theme(s)
D1. It's kind of hard to face the reality that those are things that I've done before because now I look at myself as a person I think is very kind, caring, compassionate person, and that's very true about me, and …It just kind of hurts to look back in the past and think that I've done those things because now that would never even cross my mind, ever.	Hard to accept the offending because I see myself as kind, caring and compassionate person. Hurts to think I did those things.	D1.1 Difficult to accept the offending. D1.2 See self as kind, caring, and compassionate.
D2. I've learned so much in the past year, two years about how to live …I guess you could say responsibly and how to make the most out of my life, and I just wish I could have been taught those things at a younger age, and had people who'd be there for me so that I would have known better, I would have known right from wrong.	I've learned much in the past two years about how to be responsible and get the most out of life. I wish I had been taught that at a younger age so that I would have known right from wrong.	D2.1 Learned how to be responsible after the offending. D2.2 Wishes being taught right from wrong at a younger age.
D3. I was having overnight visits with my dad for a while and my probation officer said that I can not have them. She was really afraid for my little sister, thought that I would reoffend, which would never happen.	Felt probation officer was afraid for little sister because she thought I would reoffend, but I wouldn't.	D3.1 Believed offending would not happen again.
D4. … I want to be the older brother that will look out for her. Really be concerned for her safety, and I've already actually done that you know.	I want to look out for my sister and be concerned for her safety, which I've already done.	D4.1 Wants to look out for sister. D4.2 Wants to be concerned for sister's safety. D4.3 Feels he has looked out for sister.

D5. I can't really say that I have much of a relationship with her. I want to, I want to talk to her, and I want to tell her that what I did was totally my fault, and that I have the most, the most deepest, apologetic feelings about that.	I don't have much of a relationship with my sister but I want to. I want her to know what I did was my fault and that I'm sorry.	D5.1 Wants to have relationship with sister. D5.2 Wants to apologize to sister.
D6. …I don't want her to go through life thinking, oh what did I do to deserve that…	I don't want her thinking what did I do to deserve that.	D6.1 Does not want sister thinking she deserved it.
D7. I can't help but feel partly responsible for that. For the abuse I inflicted, and I want to talk to her and I want to, I want to get that off her chest. I want to be able to say what she needs to say to me, and ask me why, you know, so I can explain it to her.	I feel partly responsible for the abuse and I want to talk to her about it. I want her to ask me why I offended so I can explain.	D7.1 Feels partly responsible. D7.2 Wants to explain why offending happened.
D8. …the professionals that are involved in her life…are saying no, it's best that you don't talk to them because they don't know me. They don't know that I'm a healthy kid now. So that kind of makes it tough with her.	The professionals involved in her life don't know me; they don't know I'm healthy now.	D8.1 Feels healthy now.
D9. I'm very cognizant of how I act towards her and I want to be really nice to her because when we get older, she'd be someone I can depend on and vice versa. I'll be someone she can depend on.	I'm very aware of my actions towards her. I want to be nice to her because we can depend on each other when we're older.	D9.1 Aware of actions towards sister. D9.2 Wants to depend on each other in the future.
D10. I still had a lot of abuse in my life that I hadn't dealt with. I've been sexually abused about three years prior to that, and I never ever disclosed, never talked about it, just kept it, I withheld it from everyone.	I had a lot abuse in my life prior to the offending and I never talked about it with anyone.	D10.1 Experienced much abuse before offending. D10.2 Never discussed own abuse.
D11. So I had a lot of things that I hadn't dealt with which kind of skewed my perception of the world.	I didn't deal with a lot of things, which skewed my perception of the world.	D11.1 Not dealing with things skewed perception of the world.

D12.	…if I think about it now and how I feel about myself now I know that I have a lot higher self-esteem now than I did way back then. So, yah feeling…just a lot of sickness in my head back then because I hadn't dealt with any of it.	My self-esteem is much higher now than before and during the offending. There was a lot of sickness in my head because I didn't deal with things.	D12.1 Higher self-esteem than before and during offending. D12.2 Sickness in my head because of not dealing with things.
D13.	…just created a sickness in my head, and I don't use that as an excuse.	Not dealing with things created a sickness in my head but I don't use that as an excuse for offending.	D13.1 Does not use sickness as an excuse.
D14.	…I don't use my childhood experience as an excuse, but it was part of what led towards offending.	Don't use experience in childhood as an excuse but it was a part of what led to offending.	D14.1 Childhood experience was part of what led to the offending.
D15.	Just, like my mom has a really poor sense of boundaries, and I learned that as well from my mom, big time. So, at the time I didn't really know that what I was doing was very wrong, it didn't really cross my mind.	I learned a poor sense of boundaries from my mom therefore at the time I didn't know what I was doing was wrong.	D15.1 Learned poor sense of boundaries. D15.2 Did not know offending was wrong at the time.
D16.	There weren't many changes in how we (with sister) interacted. It was, one day I just, you know, made that choice.	Not any changes in how I interacted with my sister. I just one day made the choice to offend.	D16.1 No changes in interaction with sister before offending. D16.2 Decided to Make the choice to offend.
D17.	Umm, one thing throughout my life that I've always kind of done is shoot myself in the foot. Whenever something is going pretty good I would kind of sabotage it, and not even on purpose I would just make a mistake and it would mess it up…when I think about it it's kind of like the way I was treated as a kid was that you know, didn't	I would always shoot myself in the foot. When things were going pretty good I would sabotage it, sometimes not even on purpose. I was treated pretty shallowly as a kid.	D17.1 Would sabotage things in life that were going well. D17.2 Felt treated shallowly as a child.

have very many good things in life, you know I was treated pretty shallowly.		
D18. So I guess on a subconscious level I carried that abuse and that mistreatment and neglect with me so when things started to go good I would screw it up…	Without realizing it I carried abuse, mistreatment, and neglect with me and would screw up when things started to go well.	D18.1 Carried abuse, mistreatment, and neglect with me.
D19. I was just in a constant state of ill thinking…	I was in a constant state of ill thinking.	D19.1 Constant state of ill-thinking.
D20. Michelle - What do you mean by ill thinking?		
…when faced with decisions and making ones that would be more harmful to myself…or different things that I would do to be more negative than positive, which is a lot different for me now because I try to surround myself with more positive things, and very positive thinking.	I would make decisions that were more harmful to me. I would do different things to be negative, but now I surround myself with positive things and positive thinking.	D20.1 Made decisions harmful to self. D20.1 Did things to be negative. D20.1 Presently, surrounds self with positive things and thinking.
D21. So I guess it was just doing things that would be more hurtful to myself without even really meaning to.	I would do hurtful things to myself without meaning to.	D21.1 Unintentionally hurt self.
D22. I've always been a pretty impulsive person, just act (snapped fingers) without thinking…	I've always been an impulsive person and would act without thinking.	D22.1 Always been impulsive.
D23. …with my knowledge or my lack of knowledge of boundaries and appropriateness that's kind of what, I hesitate to say, allowed me to do that…	My lack of knowledge of boundaries and appropriateness allowed me to do that.	D23.1 feels lack of boundaries and knowledge allowed offending to happen.
D24. …a lot of the mistakes and bad things that I've done in my life were acting on impulse before thinking of the consequences. So, a lot of impulsivity in my	I acted impulsively and did not think about consequences in many of my negative choices in life.	D24.1 Impulsively made negative choices in life.

	negative choices in life. That's not an excuse though like I have the ultimate decision right.		
D25.	I remember feeling very, very guilty and very, very bad about I had just done. I wasn't at all happy with myself or impressed with myself…	I was feeling very guilty and bad after offending. I was not happy with myself.	D25.1 Felt guilty and bad after offending. D25.2 Not happy with self after offending.
D26.	…instantly it was remorse, it was just like, "no! no! no! no! no!" after realizing what I just did, because like I said I acted and didn't think and then after I started thinking about how ugly it was. So, afterwards it was just like overwhelming, like…guilt and wishing I could take it back, but by then it was too late.	I instantly felt remorse after offending. I acted without thinking and then realized how ugly it was. I was wishing I could take it back.	D26.1 Felt remorse immediately after offending. D26.2 Acted without thinking. D26.3 After offending, realized how ugly it was. D26.4 Wished he could take it back after offending occurred.
D27.	Whenever anybody would ever say no to me, or I would feel a little bit of powerlessness, I would freak right out, it would be like white rage, and I would just go ballistic, and I would start screaming and yelling, you know, hitting the walls or whatever, just absolutely livid.	Whenever someone would say no to me I would freak out. It was like white rage, and I would scream and hit walls because I felt powerless.	D27.1 Felt powerless and freaked out when someone said no.
D28.	I never thought about this before, but I guess I dealt with the aftermath pretty negatively in a pretty poor way.	I never thought about this before but I guess I dealt with the aftermath negatively.	D28.1 Presently, thinks dealt with aftermath negatively.
D29.	So it took me like a long time to get where I am right now which is a lot better, a lot better. Like I mean I don't think I ever really loved myself until maybe, I don't know, six months ago.	I don't think I ever loved myself until about six months ago.	D29.1 Did not love self until six months ago.

D30. I think that was probably part of my offending too. I didn't care about myself at all, therefore I didn't care about anyone else and I had no compassion.	I think not caring about myself, therefore, not caring about others was part of my offending.	D30.1 Thinks not caring about self or others was part of offending.
D31. Michelle- Are you aware of having changed in any way since then?		D31.1 Feels tremendous change.
Dave: I care about others so much, you know, I'll help out where ever I can. So, it's a tremendous change, massive, like a lot more aware of what goes on around me and how to interact…	I care about others so much now and will try to help where I can so it's a tremendous change. I am more aware of what goes on around me and how to interact.	D31.2 Cares about others and tries to help. D31.3 More aware of surroundings and how to interact.
D32. I guess all in all I'm just a lot more happier being who I am. I really, really like myself now, and that's all really important.	I'm more happier being who I am. I like myself and that's important.	D32.1 More happier Being myself. D32.2 Liking myself is important.
D33. I mean if I still was down in the dumps and didn't feel very good, it would be so easy for me to go back to that place and offend again, but now I feel so good about myself and I understand that I have feelings and so does the rest of the world.	If I wasn't feeling good about myself it would be easy to reoffend. I now understand that I have feelings and so does the rest of the world.	D33.1 Easy to reoffend if not feeling good about self. D33.2 Understands that self and others have feelings.
D34. I treat people differently, you know. I treat them with a lot more respect and dignity and so massive changes, massive.	I've changed a lot because now I treat people with more respect and dignity.	D34.1 Treats people with more dignity and respect.
D35. I think I've always been a diamond in the rough…	I think I've always been a diamond in the rough.	D35.1 I've always been a diamond in the rough.
D36. Michelle- What do you believe were the influences of the change?		D36.1 Going to group home immediately after offending influenced change.
Dave: Being taken out of the situation immediately afterwards, and being put into a treatment group home, that was very	Being placed in a treatment group home immediately after the offending influenced	D36.2 Looked at self more

different circumstances for me. It made me take a look at myself a little bit more.	change. It made me look at myself more.	when in group home.
D37. Being involved with group changed a lot of things for me. It really made me think about how I interact with human beings and stuff and how I portray myself. So those are some big factors.	Being in group therapy changed a lot of things. It made me think about how I interact with others and how I see myself.	D37.1 Group therapy changed many things. D37.2 Thought about interaction with others and view of self as result of group therapy.
D38. Plus just getting older, more maturity, that helps to change.	Getting older helped influence change.	D38.1 Maturity influenced change.
D39. ...being able to express different things that I thought on the topic, getting feedback, some honest straightforward feedback from not only professionals but from other guys in similar situations.	Being able to express my thoughts and getting honest feedback from peers in group and professionals was helpful.	D39.1 Group therapy helpful because able to express thoughts and receive honest feedback.
D40. Kind of a little bit nerve wracking, a little bit intimidating going in and talking about something so personal and with so much shame around it, it's kind of a little bit intimidating.	In group I initially felt nervous and intimidated to talk about something so personal with so much shame around it.	D40.1 Initially felt nervous in group therapy. D40.2 Felt intimidated to discuss offending because of shame.
D41. Then when you do start to open up and you find out the things that you thought about were not very healthy or the way you thought about a certain thing there's a better way to think about it or go about it...	When you started to open up you find out things that were not healthy and found a better way to think about things.	D41.1 Discovered unhealthy things and better ways of thinking in group therapy.
D42. ...try to be open minded about it and think about what they were saying and try to see the logic in it.	I try to be open minded, think about what peers were saying, and try to see the logic in it.	D42.1 Try to be open-minded in group. D42.2 Thinks about

		what peers say and tries to see logic in it.
D43. I learned more about myself, and the more I learned about myself the more I liked myself, and so that, it's a correlation.	The more I learned about myself, the more I liked myself.	D43.1 Liked self more as learned more about self.
D44. So I guess I'm learning more about maturity outside of group. And I guess an insight would be the value of maturity and how it effects you relate to others and how they relate to you, because if you're very immature then they'll just, "don't even talk to me."	Learning more maturity outside of group and I how it effects relating to others.	D44.1 Learning more maturity outside of group therapy. D44.2 Learning how maturity effects relating to others.
D45. Remorse and just thinking, okay the kind of person I am now is so different then how it was back then. It's almost like an unbelief that I could have done it.	I feel remorse thinking about it. I'm so different now. It's like an unbelief that I could have offended.	D45.1 Feels remorse thinking about offending. D45.2 Feels different. D45.3 Feels like offending is an unbelief.

Second Level of Abstraction of Dave's Thoughts

First Order Theme(s) Clusters	Second Order Theme(s)
(1.) D11.1 Not dealing with things skewed perception of the world. D12.2 Sickness in my head because of not dealing with things. D10.2 Never discussed own abuse. D13.1 Does not use sickness as an excuse. D19.1 Constant state of ill thinking. D3.1 Believed offending would not happen again. D28.1 Presently, thinks dealt with aftermath negatively. D18.1 Carried abuse, mistreatment, and neglect with me. D10.1 Experienced much abuse before offending. D17.2 Felt treated shallowly as a child. D14.1 Childhood experience was part of what led to offending.	**(D1.) Belief that Ill Thinking Resulted from not Dealing with Own Abuse**
(2.) D16.2 Decided to make choice to offend. D17.1 Would sabotage things in life that were going well. D20.2 Did things to be negative. D24.1 Impulsively made negative choices in life.	**(D2.) Made Harmful Decisions to Self**

D21.1 Unintentionally hurt self. D20.1 Made decisions harmful to self. D22.1 Always been impulsive. D26.2 Acted without thinking.	
(3.)	**(D3.) Lack of Boundaries and Knowledge a Factor in Offending**
D15.1 Learned poor sense of boundaries. D15.2 Did not know offending was wrong at the time. D23.1 Feels lack of boundaries and knowledge allowed offending to happen.	
(4.)	**(D4.) Did not Care about Self**
D29.1 Did not love self until six months ago. D25.2 Not happy with self after offending. D30.1 Thinks not caring about self or others was part of offending.	
(5.)	**(D5.) Felt Apprehensive at the Onset of Counselling**
D40.1 Initially felt nervous in group therapy. D40.2 Felt intimidated to discuss offending because of shame. D27.1 Felt powerless and freaked out when someone said no.	
(6.)	**(D6.) Experienced Positive Change from Counselling**
D8.1 Feels healthy now. D33.1 Easy to reoffend if not feeling good about self. D12.1 Higher self-esteem than before and during offending.	

D32.2 Liking myself is important. D32.1 More happier being myself. D43.1 Learning more about self increased self acceptance. D20.1 Presently, surrounds self with positive things and thinking. D9.1 Aware of actions towards sister. D16.1 No changes in interaction with sister before offending. D31.3 More aware of surroundings and how to interact. D45.2 Feels different. D31.1 Feels tremendous change. D37.1 Group therapy changed many things. D37.2 Thought about interaction with others and view of self as result of group therapy. D39.1 Group therapy helpful because able to express thoughts and receive honest feedback. D41.1 Discovered unhealthy things and better ways of thinking in group therapy. D42.1 Try to be open minded in group. D42.2 Thinks about what peers say and tries to see logic in it. D31.2 Cares about others and tries to help. D33.2 Understands that self and others have feelings. D1.2 See self as kind, caring, and compassionate.	

D34.1 Treats people with more dignity and respect. D35.1 I've always been a diamond in the rough.	
(7.)	**(D7.) Feelings of Guilt and Responsibility**
D2.2 Wishes being taught right from wrong at a younger age. D5.2 Wants to apologize to sister. D26.4 Wished he could take it back after offending occurred. D25.1 Felt guilty and bad after offending. D26.1 Felt remorse immediately after offending. D45.1 Feels remorse thinking about offending. D26.3 After offending, realized how ugly it was. D2.1 Learned how to be responsible after the offending. D7.1 Feels partly responsible. D1.1 Difficult to accept the offending. D45.3 Feels like offending is an unbelief.	
(8.)	**(D8.) Care and Concern for Sibling**
D4.1 Wants to look out for sister. D4.2 Wants to be concerned for sister's safety. D4.3 Feels he has looked out for sister. D5.1 Wants to have relationship with sister. D6.1 Does not want sister thinking she deserved it. D9.2 Wants to depend on each other in the future. D7.2 Wants to explain why offending happened.	
(9.)	**(D9.) Group Home and Maturity as Contributing Factors of Change**
D36.1 Going to group home immediately after offending influenced change.	

D36.2 Looked at self more when in group home. D38.1 Maturity influenced change. D44.1 Learning more maturity outside of group therapy. D44.2 Learning how maturity effects relating to others.	

Appendix F

Thematic Abstraction of Karl's Experience

Excerpts from Protocols	Two Levels of Abstraction Paraphrase	 Theme(s)
K1. …before the offense, everything was normal but during the offense there was dramatic changes, definitely different changes.	There were dramatic changes during the offense.	K1.1 Dramatic change during offense.
K2. Then after the offense, when I done the counselling and stuff, it started off, she wasn't sure about me, and now she's forgiven me for what I've done and we've been able to move on to different steps.	She's forgiven me and we've been able to move on.	K2.1 After counselling she forgave me and we've moved on.
K3. It made me feel really bad. I sort of… like what have I done wrong. I know I shouldn't be doing this. How come I can't stop. Where can I get help. Umm, I felt terrible for what was happening and she did too. She didn't know what to do.	Felt terrible and wanted to get help, but could not stop.	K3.1 Felt terrible. K3.2 Wanted to get help. K3.3 Felt not able to stop.
K4. I was stressed out. Things between my mom and dad were not working out well. My feelings and emotions were not being met. I was being used as more of a slave than anything. I wasn't considered a person. I was just somebody who did work.	Felt stressed at home, and emotional needs were not being met.	K4.1 Felt stressed. K4.2 Felt emotional needs were not being met.
K5. I couldn't talk about any of my feelings without getting yelled at.	Not allowed to express emotions.	K5.1 Was not allowed to express emotions.
K6. I was offended as a kid so was my sister. I can remember that till this day very good. I also remember mom and dad fighting a lot, like dad coming to get us, and just sitting there not being able to do anything.	Can remember being offended against and parents fighting and felt unable to do anything about it.	K6.1 Felt unable to act.
K7. It gave me a role of protectiveness for my one sister. I did not like new	Felt protective over my sister.	K7.1 Felt protective over sister.

	people.		
K8.	It caused me to build a stronger relationship with my dad because he was the only one I could trust and my sister.	Felt I could only trust my dad and sister.	K8.1 Trusted only dad and sister.
K9.	I had no feelings, practically. I could shut my feelings off if I chose to.	I had no feelings. I could shut my feelings off.	K9.1 Had no feelings. K9.2 Shut feelings off if choice to.
K10.	If I didn't want to cry, I didn't cry. If I got angry, I got angry. I just sort of bottled it up, leave it.	I controlled my feelings and bottled them up.	K10.1 Controlled own expression of feelings. K10.2 Bottled up feelings
K11.	So we just learned that you didn't cry, you didn't say anything. You just went on as if nothing happened.	Learned not to express your feelings and forget about it.	K11.1 Learned not to express feelings at home.
K12.	I had blocked everything out when I was doing the offense, but after and before I knew what the feelings were.	Knew feelings before and after the offense but blocked them out during the offense.	K12.1 Knew own feelings before and after offending. K12.2 Blocked out feelings during offending.
K13.	Usually the offense would take place around a very stressful time, and I didn't really didn't have thoughts it just sort of came naturally, it was sort of like a stress relief.	Offending occurred around stressful times. I didn't have thoughts about offending. It was like a stress relief.	K13.1 Offending occurred during times of stress. K13.2 No thoughts of offending, it came naturally. K13.3 Offending was like a stress relief.
K14.	Emotional stress, but at the time it seemed like it was relieving stress just for that little while, but all it was, was bottling and compressing and getting my mind off what the real truth was.	Felt like a stress relief at the time, but was really hiding from the truth.	K14.1 Offending seemed to temporarily relieve stress. K14.2 Hid from the truth.
K15.	I felt really bad to the point were I attempted to kill myself. I was suicidal.	Felt really bad and was suicidal.	K15.1 Felt bad. K15.2 Felt suicidal.

K16.	I was more stressed out then ever and it made things really tight emotionally for me. It was hard to talk to my dad about things.	Became more stressed out with each offense and harder to talk about things.	K16.1 Felt more stressed after each offense. K16.2 Became harder to talk about things.
K17.	It made me more concrete.	Made me more concrete.	K17.1. Became more concrete during offending.
K18.	After every time I did it I'd keep saying why am I doing this. You know, I'm supposed to be looked up at and here I am lower than what somebody on the street would do.	Questioned self after each offense and felt guilty.	K18.1 Questioned self after each offense. K18.2 Felt guilty.
K19.	She was just going about her daily tasks and after the first few offenses probably hoping that it didn't happen again.	Thought that she was hoping the offense would not continue.	K19.1 Thought sister hoped offending would not reoccur.
K20.	I think she felt bad for what happened. I think she wanted to help me, but she didn't know how. She felt helpless, and uncertainty of what she should do.	Thought she felt helpless and uncertain of what she should do.	K20.1 Thought sister felt helpless. K20.2 Thought sister felt uncertain of what to do.
K21.	You could feel, see, but emotionally you didn't want to admit what was going on, you sort of run from yourself, you'd hide, and then after you'd throw a pad lock and chain over it, and you keep throwing it over until you were sure no body could get in.	Did not admit to it. Would hide from truth and emotions by locking them away.	K21.1 Emotionally did not admit to it during offending. K21.2 Ran from self. K21.3 Hid from self. K21.4 Threw pad lock and chain over it.
K22.	Well it would have started off with helping me stop offending…I said if I ever do this again tell somebody…	Felt sibling wanted to help me stop offending.	K22.1 Felt sister wanted to help offending stop.
K23.	Since I started counselling and finished counselling I've picked up tools on how to deal with my stress and my anger.	Learned tools from counselling to deal with stress and anger.	K23.1 Learned how to deal with anger and stress in counselling.
K24.	I look at life a little different. I look at it as if life's not fair to everyone, what you get you'd got	Looks at life differently. Believes life is not fair and one	K24.1 Looks at life differently now. K24.2 Believes life is

	to live with, and you practically determine what your future is going to hold.	determines their future.	not fair. K24.3 Believes people determine their future.
K25.	If you want to live in an abusive situation you control that. If who want to be an abuser you are the abuser. If you want to be abused, not all the time do you have the option to be abused, like my sister, she didn't want to be abused.	You control your life.	K25.1 Believes individuals control their own life.
K26.	I used to be gray. Like no body could read me. I could, it was to the point where I could arrange a conversation and have it turn out that way.	I used to be gray. I made it hard for people to read me.	K26.1 I used to be gray. K26.2 Made it hard for others to read me.
K27.	No body knew what I was feeling, They could guess, but they were never sure.	No body was sure about my feelings.	K27.1 People unsure of my feelings.
K28.	Since then I've tried to be more open, to be more honest. I'm not gray, I'm black and white and I've got a bit of gray strips like everybody has.	I've tried to be more open and honest about my feelings. I'm black and white with strips of gray.	K28.1 Open and honest about feelings after offending. K28.2 Black and white with strips of gray.
K29.	I've come back just for a booster shot because things got a little tight at home again.	I come back for counselling when things get stressful.	K29.1 Attends counselling when under stress.
K30.	It's relieving. I like to see that other kids are being helped too, and that there's people there to help us.	It relieving to know that there are people who can help.	K30.1 Feels relief knowing people can help.
K31.	I remember when I went in, I thought I was the only one, and a lot think we're the only one, and it turns out there's hundreds of us who make the same mistake.	Felt like I was the only one who has offended.	K31.1 At start of counselling felt like only one who offended.
K32.	A lot of us are afraid, but we get to know one another and we can practically talk as if we've lived with each other for years.	Afraid at first, but eventually get to know each other well.	K32.1 Felt afraid at first in counselling. K32.2 Got to know peers in

		group well.
K33. It's also a big relief to be able to express your feelings and not have somebody argue with you. To have somebody say you know, I've felt this way too.	It's relieving to express your feelings and to have someone understand how you feel.	K33.1 Feels relief expressing feelings in group counselling. K33.2 Feels relief having others understand feelings.
K34. To listen to somebody and to have somebody listen to you. There's respect in the therapy.	We listen to each other and have respect for each other.	K34.1 Feels group peers listen to each other. K34.2 Feels there is respect in therapy.
K35. Group is good because if you say something people may jump on that and say have you ever looked at the situation this way, and then you sit there and think yah, that's true, I never thought of it that way.	Group counselling is helpful because brings out different perspectives.	K35.1 Group counselling helpful because of different perspectives.
K36. ...a lot of parents just send them there and say fix him, they don't want to have anything to do with it, fix him and send him home, and it can't be done that way.	Parental involvement is necessary.	K36.1 Believes parental involvement necessary in therapy.
K37. Parents need to be there because they need to know what's going on. They need to know warning signs of when emotions are down.	Parents need to be aware of what's going on and warning signs.	K37.1 Believes parents need to know warning signs.
K38. I need to be aware of my emotions, and you can't forget and lock them up.	Awareness of emotions.	K38.1 Feels need to be aware of own emotions.
K39. For the first nine to ten months of counselling everybody thought that there was no hope because I wouldn't say anything, I couldn't even talk feelings.	Everybody felt hopeless because I couldn't express my emotions.	K39.1 Did not talk at start of counselling. K39.2 Could not talk about feelings at onset of counselling. K39.3 Thought others felt counselling was hopeless.

K40. It was getting to the point were I was getting frustrated because I didn't know what people wanted.	I didn't know what people wanted me to do and I was getting frustrated.	K40.1 Not knowing what people wanted caused frustration at start of counselling.
K41. I had no clue what feelings were so we started individual counselling…	I did not know what feelings were so I started individual counselling.	K41.1 Did not know what feelings were.
K42. I started writing my feelings down… and that was basically the key for me, right there. I had to acknowledge my feelings before anybody could help me.	Writing my feelings down was beneficial.	K42.1 Thought writing feelings down was the key. K42.2 Felt had to acknowledge feelings before receiving help.
K43. At first it was painful, frustrating because I was nervous and I'd never done it before, and what happens if you mess up and look like a fool, but after a while it felt good.	At the beginning I was frustrated and nervous about looking foolish, but after it felt good.	K43.1 Felt painful expressing feelings at first. K43.2 Felt nervous about looking foolish expressing feelings in group. K43.3 Felt good expressing feelings after a while.
K44. I love my family very much…I love them no matter what and just realizing that that can be taken away if I'm not willing to talk about my feelings. That was another big factor.	Realizing that I could lose connection with my family if I don't express my feelings influenced the change.	K44.1 Changed influenced by fear of losing family by not expressing self.
K45. Realizing that I was practically killing myself by not being able to talk. It's a no win situation if you don't talk. If you talk you can cover some ground if you don't you're lost, you don't know what to do.	Realizing that expressing myself was progress helped influence change.	K45.1 Feeling of progress by expressing self influenced change.
K46. I wasn't very sociable. Like I didn't visit that many friends, it was to the point where I hardly knew how to play tag.	I was not very sociable.	K46.1 Not sociable before and during offending. K46.2 Almost lost how

		to interact with others.
K47. It was to the point where I thought everybody hated me and then to have somebody say hey, how are you doing, what did you do this week, you felt like you were a part of something.	I felt like everybody hated me but to have someone ask how I was doing made me feel a part of something.	K47.1 Thought hated by others before and during offending. K47.2 Felt a part of something when asked how I was doing.
K48. I was suspicious. I didn't trust anyone (in group counselling). I just sat there like a stone and just listened to what everybody said. I didn't talk much.	I did not talk much because I did not trust anyone.	K48.1 Did not talk due to lack of trust in others.
K49. It was just about a nerve wreck for me, but after a while I grew into it and learned it would be alright to talk.	I felt nervous at first but later I was comfortable.	K49.1 Grew into group counselling. K49.2 Learned it was alright to talk in group counselling.
K50. Near the end of graduation it was like a part of life, I looked forward to coming…I enjoyed being with the group, and I was excited about leaving the group too.	Enjoyed group counselling and felt it was part of life, but also excited to move on.	K50.1 Enjoyed being in group counselling. K50.2 Toward end of group counselling felt it was a part of life. K50.3 Excited about leaving the group.
K51. But, when you're out of group it's completely different. You've got to apply it in every area. You can't do it half-heartedly or else you end up back at square one…	Applying what you've learned out of group counselling is hard work.	K51.1 Feels applying what was learned in group is hard work.
K52. I'm really glad I've stayed for as long as I did.	I'm glad I stayed in group counselling.	K52.1 Feels glad to have stayed in group counselling.
K53. One-on-one, I found it easier to talk. In group I was around kids my own age. I didn't trust them and I had to get used to the fact that there was nobody out there to get	Beginning with individual counselling was easier because I did not trust people.	K53.1 Felt easier to talk starting with individual counselling

	me.		
K54.	In order to succeed you have to help yourself, you can't let everybody else do the work.	To be successful you must help yourself.	K54.1 Believes that success comes with helping self.
K55.	One-on-one it was easier to talk because I knew that whatever I said it would stay in that room…	Confidentiality helped me be more open.	K55.1 Felt confidentiality made individual counselling easier.
K56.	When you're with the group it's easy to talk the talk, and it's a lot harder to walk the walk.	It's easy to talk about what you should do, but harder to actually do it.	K56.1 Feels easy in group to say what one should do, but harder to do it.
K57.	I figured for the first little while, ya, ya, I'll do this. Just at first it was so I could get out of group, because it started to get boring…but then you get into life and it's a shock just about because you've got to apply it.	Found it boring at first and completed the material just to get out of counselling, but later was surprised when having to apply it.	K57.1 Felt group counselling boring at first. K57.2 Felt shocked when applying material learned in therapy to life.
K58.	High risks, you've got to be aware, twenty-four hours a day.	Must be continuously aware of high-risk situations.	K58.1 Continuously aware of high-risk situations.
K59.	Life is harder out there than it is in here.	Life is harder outside of therapy.	K59.1 Feels life is harder outside of therapy.
K60.	There's been times where I thought for sure I was going to be abandoned.	Felt afraid of being abandoned.	K60.1 Felt afraid of being abandoned before and during offending.
K61.	There was times when I thought of just running away and hiding my problems and moving on and I'm glad I never did do that. It's incredible actually.	I'm glad that I did not run from my problems.	K61.1 Feels glad not running or hiding from problems.
K62.	I don't like hurting people. I just realized that I was hurting more	I realized I was hurting everyone around me.	K62.1 Does not like hurting

than just myself, I was hurting everybody around me instead of protecting them.		people. K62.2 Realized harm done to others.
K63. I'm able to work harder, and not do stupid things. I can actually go about something knowing that if I mess up I know I'm not going to get bit on.	Able to work harder and realize that I won't get bit on if I mess up.	K63.1 Feels ability to work harder. K63.2 Feels ability to do something without getting bit on if mistakes are made.

Second Level of Abstraction of Karl's Thoughts

First Order Theme(s) Clusters	Second Order Theme(s)
(1.) K26.1 I used to be gray. K26.2 Made it hard for others to read me. K27.1 People unsure of my feelings. K9.2 Shut feelings off if choice to. K10.1 Controlled own expression of feelings. K9.1 Had no feelings. K10.2 Bottled up feelings K11.1 Learned not to express feelings at home. K4.2 Felt emotional needs were not being met. K5.1 Was not allowed to express emotions. K12.2 Blocked out feelings during offending. K21.1 Emotionally did not admit to it during offending. K21.2 Ran from self. K21.3 Hid from self. K21.4 Threw pad lock and chain over it. K14.2 Hid from the truth. K13.2 No thoughts of offending, it came naturally. K17.1. Became more concrete during offending. K16.2 Became harder to talk about things. K46.1 Not sociable before and during offending. K46.2 Almost lost how to interact with others. K47.2 Felt a part of something when asked how I was doing.	**K1.) Disconnection from Thoughts, Feelings, and Interaction**

(2.) K3.1 Felt terrible. K15.1 Felt bad. K15.2 Felt suicidal. K47.1 Thought hated by others before and during offending. K18.1 Questioned self after each offense. K60.1 Felt afraid of being abandoned before and during offending. K6.1 Felt unable to act. K3.3 Felt not able to stop. K13.1 Offending occurred during times of stress. K13.3 Offending was like a stress relief. K14.1 Offending seemed to temporarily relieve stress. K16.1 Felt more stressed after each offense. K4.1 Felt stressed.	**(K2.) Negative Thoughts and Feelings Surrounding the Offending**
(3.) K19.1 Thought sister hoped offending would not reoccur. K20.1 Thought sister felt helpless. K20.2 Thought sister felt uncertain of what to do. K22.1 Felt sister wanted to help offending stop.	**(K3.) Believed Sibling Wanting Offending to Stop**
(4.) K39.1 Did not talk at start of counselling. K39.2 Could not talk about feelings at onset of counselling. K41.1 Did not know what feelings were. K32.1 Felt afraid at first in	**(K4.) Gradual Change in Perspective of Counselling**

counselling. K43.1 Felt painful expressing feelings at first. K43.2 Felt nervous about looking foolish expressing feelings in group. K31.1 At start of counselling felt like only one who offended. K42.2 Felt had to acknowledge feelings before receiving help. K48.1 Did not talk due to lack of trust in others. K8.1 Trusted only dad and sister. K40.1 Not knowing what people wanted caused frustration at start of counselling. K57.1 Felt group counselling boring at first. K39.3 Thought others felt counselling was hopeless. K49.1 Grew into group counselling. K50.1 Enjoyed being in group counselling. K50.2 Toward end of group counselling felt it was a part of life. K50.3 Excited about leaving the group. K52.1 Feels glad to have stayed in group counselling.	
(5.)	**(K5.) Counselling Seen as Hard Work**
K24.1 Looks at life differently now. K24.2 Believes life is not fair. K24.3 Believes people determine their future. K25.1 Believes individuals control their own life. K54.1 Believes that success comes with helping	

self. K51.1 Feels applying what was learned in group is hard work. K56.1 Feels easy in group to say what one should do, but harder to do it. K57.2 Felt shocked when applying material learned in therapy to life. K59.1 Feels life is harder outside of therapy. K36.1 Believes parental involvement necessary in therapy. K37.1 Believes parents need to know warning signs.	
(6.) K62.1 Does not like hurting people. K62.2 Realized harm done to others after offending. K1.1 Dramatic change during offense. K3.2 Wanted to get help. K7.1 Felt protective over sister. K18.2 Felt guilty.	**(K6.) Did not Want to Harm Others**
(7.) K42.1 Thought writing feelings down was the key. K43.3 Felt good expressing feelings after a while. K45.1 Feeling of progress by expressing self influenced change. K49.2 Learned it was alright to talk in group counselling. K23.1 Learned how to deal with anger and stress in counselling.	**(K7.) Experienced Positive Change from Counselling**

K53.1 Felt easier to talk starting with individual counselling K33.1 Feels relief expressing feelings in group counselling. K29.1 Attends counselling when under stress. K61.1 Feels glad not running or hiding from problems. K44.1 Changed influenced by fear of losing family by not expressing self. K12.1 Knew own feelings before and after offending. K38.1 Feels need to be aware of own emotions. K28.1 Open and honest about feelings after offending. K28.2 Black and white with strips of gray. K58.1 Continuously aware of high-risk situations. K2.1 After counselling she forgave me and we've moved on. K63.1 Feels ability to work harder. K63.2 Feels ability to do something without getting bit on if mistakes are made. K55.1 Felt confidentiality made individual counselling easier. K34.1 Feels group peers listen to each other. K34.2 Feels there is respect in therapy. K33.2 Feels relief having others understand feelings. K35.1 Group counselling helpful because of different perspectives.	

K30.1 Feels relief knowing people can help. K32.2 Got to know peers in group well.	

Appendix G

Shared Themes

Second Order Theme(s)	Third Order Theme(s)
1. (O7.) Belief that Own Sexual Abuse was a Factor in Offending **(D1.) Belief that Ill Thinking Resulted from not Dealing with Own Abuse** **(D3.) Lack of Boundaries and Knowledge a Factor in Offending** **(O5.) Normalized and Minimized Offending**	**1. Unhealthy Thinking a Result of Past Negative Experiences**
2. (O4.) Disconnection from Thoughts and Emotions **(K1.) Disconnection from Thoughts, Feelings, and Interaction**	**2. Experienced Disconnection from Thoughts and Feelings**
3. (O6.) Felt Depressed **(D4.) Did not Care about Self** **(O8.) Set Self up for Failure** **(D2.) Made Decisions Harmful to Self**	**3. Lack of Concern for Self**
4. (K2.) Negative Thoughts and Feelings Surrounding the Offending **(D7.) Feelings of Guilt and Responsibility** **(O9.) Feelings of Guilt and Responsibility** **(O1.) Desire for Power and Control**	**4. Thoughts and Feelings of Guilt and Responsibility**
5. (O10.) Initially Felt Therapy was not Needed **(D5.) Felt Apprehensive at the Onset of Counselling** **(K4.) Gradual Change in Perspective of Counselling**	**5. Initial Reluctance of Counselling**

6. (K6.) Did Not Want to Harm Others **(O3.) Apprehension and Relief upon Discovery of Offending** **(O2.) Care and Concern for Sibling** **(D8.) Care and Concern for Sibling** **(K3.) Believed Sibling Wanted Offending to Stop**	**6. Realized Offending was Harmful**
7. (O11.) Experienced Positive Change from Counselling **(D6.) Experienced Positive Change from Counselling** **(D9.) Group Home and Maturity as Contributing Factors of Change** **(K5.) Counselling Seen as Hard Work** **(K7.) Experienced Positive Change from Counselling**	**7. Acknowledges Experiencing Positive Change and Growth from Counselling**

Appendix H

Higher-Level Abstraction of Shared Themes

Third Order Theme(s)	Fourth Order Theme(s)
1. Unhealthy Thinking a Result of Past Negative Experiences **2. Lack of Concern for Self** **3. Experienced Disconnection from Thoughts and Feelings**	**1. Internal and External Turmoil Precipitated Offending**
4. Thoughts and Feelings of Guilt and Responsibility **5. Realized Offending was Harmful**	**2. Thoughts of Wanting to Stop Offending**
6. Initial Reluctance of Counselling **7. Acknowledges Experiencing Positive Change and Growth from Counselling**	**3. Progressively Experienced Positive Change and Growth from Counselling**

Appendix I

Overall Presentation of Themes

	Shared Themes	Number of Participants
1.	Internal and External Turmoil Precipitated Offending	(3)
	-Unhealthy Thinking a Result of Past Negative Experiences	(2)
	-Lack of Concern for Self	(2)
	-Experienced Disconnection from Thoughts and Feelings	(2)
2.	Thoughts of Wanting to Stop Offending	(3)
	-Thoughts and Feelings of Guilt and Responsibility	(3)
	-Realized Offending was Harmful	(3)
3.	Progressively Experienced Positive Change and Growth from Counselling	(3)
	-Initial Reluctance of Counselling	(3)
	-Acknowledges Experiencing Positive Change and Growth from Counselling	(3)